



Making it Old: Premodern Japanese Poetry in English Translation

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ABSTRACT

Premodern Japan boasts one of the world's richest and most venerable poetic traditions, with a written history dating back to about the 6th century CE. But translations into English of its various genres, notably *waka* and *haiku*, only began to appear in the mid-19th century. The extreme differences between English and premodern literary Japanese and the welter of classical poetic conventions have complicated accurate interpretation and translation. A historical overview of representative examples reveals a trajectory from heavily naturalized renditions to increasingly literal ones in terms of both form and content, as Anglophones became more familiar with Japanese history and culture. This new willingness to let premodern Japanese poetry speak for itself, to "make it old," so to speak, developed in concert with stylistic developments in English poetry, which in turn were influenced by Japanese poetry in English. This overview also reveals that the stylistic choices made by Western translators tended increasingly to diverge from those by their Japanese counterparts. While translations from the mid-19th century to the mid-20th century receive primary attention here, more recent examples are also selectively considered.

KEYWORDS

Translation; Japanese; poetry; *waka*; *haiku*

His intentions were to stay at this island (Yezo) and learn some of the Japanese language, and from there go down to Yeddo, the principal city of Nepon, and, if the English or Americans ever open trade with the Japanese, he would find employment as an interpreter.

—*The Seaman's Friend* (Honolulu, S[andwich] I[slands], Dec. 1, 1848)¹

Ronald MacDonald's intent to become the first American to set up as a Japanese language interpreter never did bear fruit before he was borne home by the USS *Preble* in 1849 from a Japan still largely secluded from the West by shogunal law. So it seems incredible that it took only 16 more years for the first translation into English of a complete collection of classical Japanese verse to appear in print. The pace, volume, and variety of translations grew inexorably thereafter, to the point where today a library of books in English translation stands in testimony to a poetic tradition now recognized as one of the world's greatest.² (One modern multi-volume collection of classical Japanese poetry contains about 450,000 verses.³)

The history of Anglophone translation of classical Japanese poetry is so short and recent that it can be traced with rare precision.⁴ It reveals a process of reciprocity and symbiosis in which early Anglophone translators began by heavily reworking Japanese verse to suit mid-19th-century poetic expectations. Then as time passed, more and more of them changed their approaches to varying degrees, in concert with the evolution of English poetic style. Concurrently the spare but vivid brevity of the Japanese poetic language helped condition the stylistic choices of the translators grappling with it, and then those renditions went on in turn to exert an important impact on Anglophone poetic development.⁵

The overview that follows will trace that trajectory. It may come as no surprise that Anglophone translation of Japanese classical poetry came over time, to a varying extent and with many exceptions, to cleave more closely to the form and content of the originals, with less ornament and interpolation—to become, in a word, more literal.⁶ The intent here is to explore the phases and manifestations of that shift. Primary attention will be paid to translations made until just after the Second World War, as the development of a more literal approach by many translators was already manifest, and because the proliferation of translations thereafter precludes anything but a cursory postscript here, in which one or another of many readers' favorite translators will inevitably be neglected. Nor can I address translations of modern Japanese poetry, a genre that progressively abandoned the more complex literary language (*bungo* 文語) and took shape in response to foreign poetry as well as to the Japanese classical past.⁷ So too must I pass over translations into English of poetry composed by Japanese in the Chinese language. And finally, nothing more than a nod can be given to the impact on Anglophone translation by translators of French, German, and other languages.⁸

It is a basic tenet of translation that every attempt will fall somewhere on the axis between the literal and the liberal. As Friedrich Schleiermacher memorably encapsulated it two centuries ago, "Either the translator leaves the writer in peace as much as possible and moves the reader toward him; or he leaves the reader in peace as much as possible and moves the writer toward him."⁹ James J. Y. Liu has characterized this Scylla and Charybdis as "barbarization" versus "naturalization;" others as "foreignization" versus "domestication."¹⁰ Naturalization attempts to transcend the original text itself in favor of a "natural" English idiom (subjectively perceived, to be sure) that hopefully mimics the experience of reading the original text and evokes (however conjecturally) the underlying feeling that it did for the original audience. It has been argued that naturalization represents a kind of cultural hegemony or literary imperialism, as the original text is subjugated to the conventions of the receiving culture.¹¹ It has also been argued that naturalization can create an illusion of transparency that obscures the essential difference between the original and the intervention of the translator (Venuti 2008). But the strictly literal *verbum pro verbo* approach, with its inevitable Nabokovian "rebarbative barricades of square brackets," is equally hegemonic, in that it likewise treacherously misrepresents the presumed effect that a work had on its original audience.¹² In the end, every translation navigates what the British poet and translator Daniel Weissbort (1925-2013) calls a "double labyrinth," puzzling its way into a text and then puzzling its way out again, but each one remains incarcerated in its own misprision.¹³ And yet the inevitable disjunction between signifier and signified means that each translation becomes its own sovereign artistic entity (cf. Walter Benjamin, "Translation is a mode").¹⁴

The problematic relationship between the literal and figural as it impinges on the translation of Japanese poetry was identified as early as 1841, in a remarkably prescient observation by the author of *Manners and Customs of the Japanese in the Nineteenth Century*. The work is attributed to Mary Margaret Blair Busk (1779-1863) and was based on the accounts of Philipp von Siebold (1796-1866) and several Dutch residents of Japan.¹⁵ It contains two romanized poems with English translations made from the Dutch, as well as a few other English paraphrases of poems without romanization. In inviting the reader to examine the Japanese romanizations and the English translations of them via the Dutch, the author observes that they will show “either that the Japanese language has great power of compression, or that the Dutch translator has been exceedingly prolix” (214).¹⁶ The subsequent process of narrowing that gap will be our focus here.

As the remark in *Manners and Customs of the Japanese* suggests, the task of the translator of ancient Japanese poetry has been challenging, and particularly so for Anglophones. Japanese is one of the most difficult of all major languages for a native English speaker to master, having a complicated grammar and multiple writing systems.¹⁷ This was even more so a century ago, before systematic limits were imposed on the thousands of Chinese characters borrowed to write it and the myriad idiosyncratic usages traditionally employed, and before sophisticated language textbooks, dictionaries, and classroom methodologies were available, not to mention the internet. The language so frustrated St. Francis Xavier, the most famous early Christian missionary to the archipelago, that he called it “the devil’s own tongue,” diabolically developed to impede the spreading of the Gospels.

The scale of the problems that confront translators of classical Japanese poetry will be suggested below through the diachronic examination of a few main examples. The poetic genre that was traditionally considered the most prestigious, and that was featured in the 21 classical imperial poetic anthologies made over the course of half a millennium, was the *waka* 和歌, which consists of 31 syllables (morae) divided into five parts (or measures, *ku* 句) of 5, 7, 5, 7, and 7.¹⁸ *Waka* literally means “Japanese poem” or “Japanese song,” and in its widest definition it denotes any verse in vernacular Japanese, in contradistinction to poetry in Chinese (*kanshi* 漢詩 or *shi* 詩), the language that functioned in premodern East Asia much as Latin did in medieval Europe (and which is as different grammatically from Japanese as English is). But in common usage, *waka* refers to the 31-syllable variety. This type of poem is also known as *tanka* 短歌 (short poem), in contrast to the *chōka* 長歌 (or *nagauta*, long poem) that became more or less obsolete in the 9th century. A *tanka* composed as a coda to a *chōka* may also sometimes be labeled a *hanka* 反歌 (envoy). And finally, it may simply be called an *uta* 歌 (song), which draws attention to the importance of orality in its sonic structure and traditional delivery, as opposed to poems in Chinese, which in Japan were primarily received visually on the written page. *Waka* are divided into three basic topics: the seasons, love, and miscellaneous, the last of which includes travel, felicitations, laments, and so forth. The earliest preserved verses probably date from about the 6th century CE, and inclusion in an imperial anthology ensured poetic immortality for the poet so honored. Translations of *waka* poetry will be the central focus of what follows here, though a *haiku* or two will be considered as well (the *haiku* developed from the first half of a *waka*; see n. 31).

Here is one famous example of a waka from the first imperially commissioned waka anthology, *Kokinshū* (or *Kokin wakashū*, Anthology of waka ancient and modern [905], 9: 409):

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| honobono to | In the dim light of dawn |
| akashi no ura no | at Akashi Bay, |
| asagiri ni | a boat fades from sight behind an island |
| shimagakure yuku | in the morning mist, |
| fune o shi zo omou | and with it go my thoughts. |

The first and most obvious question that faces the translator after having decrypted the individual lexical items is what the totality means. This particular verse is a study in transition and contrast: perhaps a moving boat versus a stationary speaker, a stationary speaker versus a movement of thought, the incipient disappearance of the boat into the misty dawn, and the eventual but inevitable disappearance of the speaker as well. It is about beginnings and endings, which the poet and essayist Urabe Kenkō in *Tsurezuregusa* (Essays in idleness, ca. 1319-32) found the most moving.¹⁹ Here, all is objective description until the last lyric line. Some waka poems are accompanied by prose notes by the poet or an editor that provide context and help make sense of the genre's notorious ellipticality. But the only prose note that accompanies the Akashi Bay verse simply states that it has been attributed by some to the great poet of two centuries earlier, Kakinomoto no Hitomaro 柿本人麻呂 (ca. 660-724).

Certain indirect aids nevertheless help formulate a "classical" reading, i.e., the horizon of expectations of an original readership. One is provided by the fact that the *Kokinshū* editors placed the verse in the book of that anthology devoted to travel. In such verses, the traveler is male unless otherwise indicated, since courtly women at that time seldom left the confines of the capital. Poetic convention further holds that he faces his journey with loneliness, melancholy, and perhaps even fear, since he is leaving the land and people he knows (in the case of court poets, this is usually the capital and its aristocratic residents) and setting out for a dangerous unknown from which he may never return. Travel is not an adventure that is happily anticipated or experienced; instead, the traveler knows that he will be trespassing on the lands of strange people and strange gods, and if he dies, his kin at home may never know where or how. One early poetic trope is of a traveler happening upon an anonymous corpse lying by the wayside. This particular poem becomes even more moving when it is recalled that in the minds of courtiers in the capital, the Akashi area (just west of today's Kōbe) traditionally marked the boundary between near and far. Once past Akashi, the traveler was truly in the Great Unknown.

The traveler conventionally misses above all his spouse, and this "waiting woman" constitutes the other half of the travel dyad; she stays at home, at night in an empty bed, likewise filled with loneliness and worry. The spouse is conventionally female, though in the absence of gender markers, homoerotic emotions have occasionally been adduced in waka on love.²⁰ Sometimes poems are composed on predetermined topics (*dai* 題), and the conventions demanded by such topics provide another guide to how the resulting poem is to be classically understood.

Fundamental as well is the default perspective of waka on the self, the here, and the now. Here, the verb *omou* ("to think," "to brood," "to love," etc.) will, in the absence of other grammatical indications, be expressing the speaker's own thoughts, which are

usually about elevated human emotions, rather than, in this case, the construction of the boat or the provisions available on board.

Certainly the reader may enjoy the poem any way he or she chooses, but a classical reading will depend on an understanding of poetic conventions and a basic cultural competence. “It is not enough to know the meanings of the words; one also has to understand the meaning of the meanings.”²¹ The exiguous ambit of 31 syllables stretches much further in this system, since more can remain unexpressed. And the missing information is supplied by the reader or listener, making for a more personal and dramatic reception. The same is true for literal translation: it requires more reader effort, which moves the text in a “writerly” direction.

Without these conventions, one might read this verse as that of an early riser who envies those on the boat sailing out of sight on a pleasure cruise. But with them, it is clearly a poem about the uncertainty and disquiet of travel, and life itself, metaphorically enhanced by the boat disappearing in the mist behind an island. A boat as a metaphor for the impermanence of all things lies at the center of this verse by Manzei Shami 満誓沙弥, one of the most famous compositions in *Man'yōshū* (Anthology of myriad leaves [late 8th century], 3: 351):²²

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| yo no naka o | To what shall I compare |
| nani ni tatoemu | this life? |
| asabiraki | It is as when a boat |
| koginishi fune no | is rowed away at daybreak, |
| ato naki gotoshi | leaving nothing in its wake. |

But though the horizon of expectations of the Akashi Bay verse can be significantly narrowed by poetic convention, there is still considerable room for interpretation even for the classical hermeneut. In that verse, for example, the speaker is perhaps the spouse of a male traveler, who is watching him sail away. The strength of *omou* (“my thoughts follow”) suggests that the seaborne traveler is likely (but not necessarily) known to the speaker. Or perhaps the speaker is himself a traveler but by land, and he does not know anyone on the boat but is moved by its disappearance into the mist to brood (*omou*) on the dangers of his own journey or more generally on the evanescence of all things. Some have even suggested that the verse depicts the departure of a courtly miscreant into exile, since the poem is placed very near to another such poem by Ono no Takamura 小野篁 (802-53) in the *Kokinshū* anthology (see below; personal names appear here in Japanese order, surname first).²³ After all, there is no proof that Hitomaro, who lived two centuries before, actually composed it, and the *Kokinshū* editors acknowledge the uncertain **W**of the attribution in their footnote. Some even imagine that the poet is on board the boat, either watching another boat disappear or sailing on that very vessel himself.

Moreover, conventions anachronistically applied can be counterproductive. By *Kokinshū* times, the default season for mist (*kiri*) was autumn, and haze (*kasumi*) was an attribute of spring. But this convention had yet to take shape in the earlier years of the Man'yō period.²⁴ So readers of *Kokinshū* in the 10th century would likely have conceived of the Akashi Bay verse as taking place in autumn, which would lend further overtones of evanescence. But if the verse was indeed composed by

Hitomaro at around the turn of the 8th century, then the autumn season would not have been the only alternative. As the centuries passed, nearly every word in the poetic lexicon developed this kind of connotative reticulation that conditions interpretation.

There is one further aspect of *Kokinshū* that affects reader response, and that is the principle of association and progression.²⁵ The editors of the anthology arranged the constituent poems so that each was associated in some way with the one that preceded it and contributed to an overall progression. The images in the seasonal poems in books 1-6 of the anthology follow their order of appearance in nature, not just macrocosmically through the four seasons but also microcosmically within each, with spring moving through the first green shoots to plum blossoms to the first appearance of cherry blossoms, etc. (here is the start of the “seasonal words” [*kigo* 季語] still essential in traditional-style haiku composition). The love verses too follow the conventions of the courtly poetic love affair, progressing from love without meeting, to the first meeting, to the height of the affair, and then to the final inevitable parting, with each verse also having some association with its immediate neighbors. Here in the travel book of *Kokinshū*, the two poems before the Akashi poem are these:²⁶

When he was going into exile to Oki Province he sent this to someone in the capital, saying that he had boarded the boat and was departing.

Lord Ono no Takamura

9: 407

wata no hara
yasoshima kakete
kogiidenu
hito ni wa tsuge yo
ama no tsuribune

Toward the eighty islands
of the vast sea
I now row away.
Tell the one I leave behind,
seafolk in your fishing boat!

Topic unknown

Poet unknown.

9: 408

miyako idete
kyō mikanohara
izumikawa
kawakaze samushi
koromo kaseyama

Having left the capital,
I look today on Mika Meadow
and Izumi River.
The river wind is cold–
lend me a robe, Kase Mountain!

9: 409

honobono to
akashi no ura no
asagiri ni
shimagakure yuku
fune o shi zo omou

In the dim light of dawn
at Akashi Bay,
a boat fades from sight behind an island
in the morning mist,
and with it go my thoughts.

The editors tell us in the prose headnote (*kotobagaki* 詞書) to the first poem that it was composed by Ono no Takamura when he was exiled. We are therefore encouraged

to read this as real emotion, stemming from a real situation. Takamura was sentenced to the most distant of the three degrees of exile for feigning illness out of pique regarding the conditions of his appointment as an emissary to Tang China, so in avoiding one journey he was ironically forced on another. (He was subsequently pardoned.) *Hito* may be interpreted either as “person” or “people,” both in the headnote and in the poem.

The next verse, though it refers to a journey by land, reifies temporal and spatial progression. As opposed to the previous verse, where Takamura has left the capital but in a sense is only now taking his final parting from the land he knows, here the poet has definitively put the capital behind him, with three place names inscribing the increased geographical distance. Takamura’s verse, in its simple, declarative structure, seems all the more deeply felt—the poet is too moved to think of poetic embellishments. This next one pairs with it through rhetorical contrast, for it is an archetype of ingenious wordplay, an aspect of *Kokinshū* that has been both admired and reviled over the ages. The toponyms all lie a short distance to the south of the capital and are the grist for puns that make this poem work in the original Japanese and that are lost in the translation above. The first, Mikanojima (Mika Meadow), begins with *mi*, which pivots between *kyō mi* (lit., I see today) and Mikanojima, and the third, Kaseyama (Kase Mountain) pivots between *koromo kase* (lend me a robe) and Kaseyama, resulting in a verse that literally reads “Having left the capital, I today [see/Mi]jima Meadow on Izumi River. The river wind is cold—a robe [lend,/Kase] Mountain.” Such locutions are called *kakekotoba* 掛詞 (pivot words).

But the condensation and wordplay in this waka leaves room for other interpretations. Some commentators think that the first measure actually involves a pivot between *mika* (three days) and Mikanojima, meaning “it has been three days since leaving the capital and here is Mika Meadow.” It has also been argued that Izumikawa embeds a pun on *itsu mi* (when will I see) and Izumi, because both are written *いつみ* in ancient orthography, which does not distinguish between voiced and unvoiced phonemes. This second measure would therefore presumably have the meaning of “Izumi River, which I had wondered when I would see.” Opponents of these interpretations hold that despite poetic license, Mika Meadow is much too close to the capital to require three days to reach, and that “when will I see” in the sense of “which I had wondered when I would see” is too tortured grammatically to be plausible here.²⁷ Yet another suggestion is that Izumikawa embeds the verb *izu* (to go out). But whatever the interpretation, the paronomasia of the poem is obvious, and that effect is further enhanced by the repetition of the “mi” sound in the first three measures and the predominance of the “k” sound throughout. The verse also establishes a lexical link to the previous through the repetition of the word *hara*, which means any broad and flat expanse, be it water or land (hence “vast sea” for *wata no hara* in the first verse). And in addition to the wordplay, the verse evokes the poetic essence of travel, which is travail.

This poem then connects to the Akashi Bay verse through the shared use of place names and movement. The reader of the anthology now not only enjoys each poem itself but also the clever ways the editors have arranged them into larger patterns of reception, paving the way toward the extended linked-verse (*renga* 連歌) sequences that would subsequently develop. Each reader may even create subjective connections perhaps not anticipated by the original editors, but this too adds to the pleasure of the text as it transforms from a readerly (closed) entity into a writerly (open) one. Again,

each poem was understood to have been generated by a living person in response to real emotions, but for some poems the actual conditions of their original composition were uncertain, as in the case of the second verse above. The editors therefore make special note there that the topic and poet are unknown. Here again, reader imagination comes into play. Some readers even enjoyed providing prose contexts for such verses, generating “poem tales” (*utamonogatari* 歌物語), the most famous being *Ise monogatari* (Tales of Ise, 10th century). In fact, some of the passages in *Ise monogatari* correspond to some of the longer headnotes in *Kokinshū*.

In this environment, it is easier to see why our Akashi Bay poem might be connected in a reader’s mind with the exiled courtier Takamura. The island behind which the boat vanishes perhaps becomes one of the “eighty islands of the vast sea” that Takamura mentioned on setting out. And the reader of the Akashi Bay poem in the context of *Kokinshū* has now traveled further and further from the capital, to very edge of the familiar world.

A poem could also contribute to convention itself. The Akashi Bay poem became one of the best-known poems in the corpus, and Akashi Bay became a “famous poetic place” (*utamakura* 歌枕), as in the following example, composed three centuries later by Retired Emperor Gotoba 後鳥羽 (1198-1239):

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| usugiri no | The light mist |
| akashi no ura wa | in Akashi Bay |
| hareyarade | fails to clear, |
| sadaka ni miezu | and I see but faintly |
| oki no tsuribune | the fishing boat in the offing. |

Here the Retired Emperor’s verse in the hundred-poem sequence he composed for *Shōji shodo hyakushu* 正治初度百首 (First hundred-poem sequences of the Shōji era, 1200, no. 43) depends on reader recognition of the *Kokinshū* Akashi Bay verse on which it is based. Gotoba was the patron of *Shinkokinshū* (New anthology of waka ancient and modern, provisionally completed in 1205), which is characterized by a neoclassical attempt to reinvigorate waka by using old words to new effect. In alluding to the earlier verse (a technique called *honkadori* 本歌取り), Gotoba invests the ostensible simplicity of his new verse with venerable overtones that are opaque to those who do not recognize the classical allusion. Poet and informed reader both view the present through the lens of past tradition.

Once the Anglophone translator has divined the meaning of a poem or at least narrowed the horizon of expectations by weighing the range of denotations and connotations, he or she is faced with the next hurdle, which is to reconstitute it in English. Here the most immediate problem is one of syntax, as standard Japanese word order is subject-object-verb and English is subject-verb-object, and because modifying phrases come before the words they modify in Japanese instead of after them, as in English. In the example above, a word-for-word rendition reads thus:

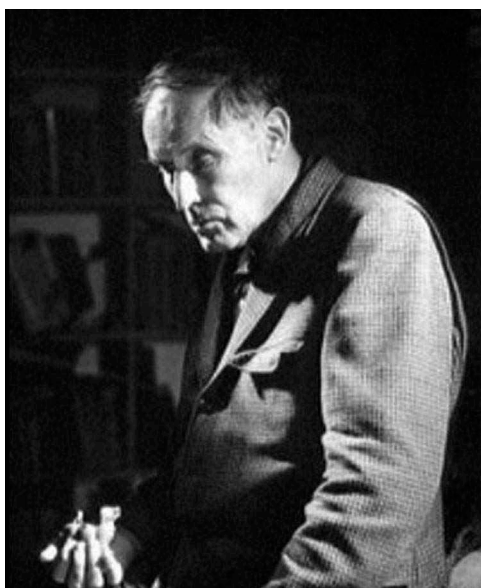
Faintly brightening Akashi Bay’s morning mist in island-hid-going boat of think.

Translated into normal English, the poem will read *exactly backwards* from the original Japanese:

I think of the boat that fades from sight behind the island in the morning mist of Akashi Bay
that is brightening faintly.

The crux of the problem in this poem is that the climax in Japanese comes at the end, in the word “think,” with the beginning passages setting the stage for what in the original is that poignant last verb. In natural English, the decisive verb “think” comes right at the start of the poem, leaving the rest to trail off ineffectually. But this can be manipulated by the translator, along with the order of the other Japanese measures, into the version on the previous page: “In the dim light of dawn/at Akashi Bay,/a boat fades from sight behind an island/in the morning mist,/and with it go my thoughts.” Now the all-important “thoughts” falls at the end in English, as it does in the original. An alternative ending, “and my thoughts follow in its wake” might even be stronger, and yet it would naturalize more, introducing as it does the concept of the wake, which is not explicitly there in the original. “Wake” also allows the notion of a funeral wake (*tsūya*) to be poetically overheard, one that may later be for the speaker himself. But more literal translators will protest that such an interpretation is not justified by the words on the page. And it would imply a relationship with the famous poem by Manzei Shami above, which is unlikely if in fact Hitomaro was the poet of the Akashi Bay verse in question.

The redoubtable translator Arthur Waley (1889-1966) approaches the problem of word order in a workmanlike and didactic way in his *Japanese Poetry: The Uta* of 1919. Therein he takes pains to make the five Japanese measures relate to five English lines; he then arranges the translated measures in their natural English order but places an Arabic numeral before each that identifies its position in the corresponding Japanese (57):



Arthur Waley

Source: https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/4069.Arthur_Waley

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Hono-bono to | 5 My thoughts are with a boat |
| 2 Akashi no ura no | 4 Which travels island-hid |
| 3 Asa-giri ni | 3 In the morning-mist |
| 4 Shima-kakure-yuku | 2 Of the shore of Akashi,– |
| 5 Fune wo shi zo omou. | 1 Dim, dim! |

And there are further decisions imposed on the Anglophone translator that are not explicitly demanded by the Japanese. One is that *akashi* functions as a *kakekotoba* in which it is first used as the continuative form of the verb *akasu*, meaning variously to dawn, brighten, redden, clarify, or stay up all night; it then pivots to signify Akashi Bay. Such paronomasia not only compresses more meaning into the short poem but also adds impressive artistry, as we saw in the poem above with the wordplay on place names. The technique, also frequently found in *Nō* plays, is difficult to preserve in translation as it is generally alien to the English poetic tradition. In the case of this poem, since the place name Akashi 明石 is written with the characters for “bright” and “stone,” one might attempt something on the order of “In the morning mist of faintly dawning Bright Stone Bay, a boat fades from view behind the island, and with it go my thoughts,” with “faintly dawning bright” pivoting into the toponym Bright Stone. But “faintly dawning” and “bright” seem contradictory, particularly in the context of morning mist, and in any case, such an attempt might introduce a “barbarity” into the English that is not present in the original.

Another problem involved in the English translation is articles, which Japanese does not require. Should the verse, for example, be rendered “a boat fades from sight behind an island,” or “the boat fades from sight behind the island,” or some other combination of definite and indefinite articles, none of which encumber the Japanese? “The boat” and “the island” imply that they are already known or that they have already become part of the mental landscape against which the action of the verse occurs; “a boat” and “an island” are new information; the speaker is just now seeing the boat and is struck by a pang of sadness. Indefinite articles also suggest a traveling speaker’s unfamiliarity with the local landscape and the boat. Nor is it explicit in the Japanese if the boat and the island are singular or plural; if one construes the islands to be plural, then this verse relates even better to the “eighty islands” of Takamura.²⁸

It is clear from the above that translation from Japanese poetry to English requires a host of decisions on the part of the translator, and while translators from all languages are in a sense translator-adaptors given the impossibility of perfect equivalence, the adaptations required between English and Japanese are particularly pronounced. Reading such verse also requires commensurately broad background knowledge. From as early as *Manners and Customs of the Japanese*, some translators have abandoned the effort and resorted to prose paraphrase.

Some early Anglophone readers did not find the game worth the candle. For example, Ernest Satow (1843-1929), author of *A Diplomat in Japan*, was particularly blunt in an article he wrote in 1874 in which he dismisses the “so-called poetry” of the Japanese as mere “dexterity in punning.”²⁹ Early translators therefore took pains to naturalize these short Japanese poetic forms, in part to make them palatable to audiences who knew nothing of the country or its poetic traditions and were convinced of

their own cultural superiority. Below, for example, is a beloved verse by the 18th-century Japanese poet Kaga no Chiyo 加賀千代 (or Chiyojo/Chiyoni, 1703-1775).³⁰ It is in the 17-syllable form now known as a haiku, which today is universally familiar but in the 19th century was still a novelty outside of Japan.³¹ First, here is a literal translation of the verse:

| | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| asagao ni | Morning glories |
| tsurube torarete | well-bucket taken over |
| moraimizu | borrowed water. |

Naturalized a bit, it goes something like this:

My well-bucket
overgrown with morning glories,
I borrow water.

So enamored is the speaker of the morning glories that have overgrown her well-bucket that she leaves them as they are and instead borrows water from her neighbor. Beauty trumps convenience.³²

Again, the poem is more complex in the original Japanese, and moreover we do not know what the exact original was. There is one version in Chiyo's own hand that reads *asagao ya*, but the above version with *asagao ni* is the better known. The exclamatory *ya* in *asagao ya*, one of many "cutting words" (*kireji* 切字) in haiku that subdivide a statement, isolates *asagao* (morning glories) more from what follows, foregrounding the beauty of the *asagao* themselves. The agent marker *ni* in *asagao ni*, by contrast, emphasizes more strongly the role of the morning glory vines in binding the bucket fast. In the case of lesser-known poems that only exist in manuscript versions, this kind of textual variation is another challenge for the translator, who can waste inordinate amounts of time on a crux that upon comparison with other manuscripts turns out simply to be scribal error.

There is a further complication here in that the word for "well-bucket" (*tsurube*) is partly homophonic with the word for "vine" (*tsuru*). The translator may choose to append a note about the homophone in Chiyo's poem or try to replicate something of the wordplay, "showing" rather than "telling," the reader, perhaps like this:

My well-bucket
bound by a welter of morning glories,
I borrow water.

But since the homophone is different in English, the translator is being faithful not to the sonic repetition *per se* but to the fact that such repetition exists, here with the use of several "b" and "w" sounds. This idea of equivalency in translation goes all the way back at least to Cicero (106-43 BCE), who wrote in the context of his own translations from Greek that "I did not hold it necessary to render word for word, but I preserved the general style and force of the language. For I did not think I ought to count them out to the reader like coins, but to pay them by weight."³³ But one could argue that here the effort is not worth it, since while Japanese readers of haiku are preternaturally appreciative of such soundplay, English readers may find such alliteration in so short a space to be heavy-handed.

But as we have seen above, many 19th-century readers, conditioned by the sonnets of Shakespeare and the idylls of Tennyson, did not consider such Japanese micro-poems to be poems at all. One early translator, Edwin Arnold (1832-1904), wrote eloquently of the sacrifices he felt were necessary in order to overcome this cultural disconnect:

A Japanese girl, going to her well in the morning, finds that a convolvulus during the night has twined its crimson and purple bells and green tendrils round the pail. It is too beautiful to disturb! She abandons the bucket to the fragrant invader, and goes next door to fill her domestic utensils. Out of this simple incident comes a famous song, done in three lines and five words. These are—

“Asagao
Tsurube torarete
Morai midzu.”³⁴

The literal translation of which is—

“Convolvulus
Bucket taking,
I borrow water.”

And every Japanese ear understands, and every Japanese mind can delight in, the photographic brevity with which the scene and the thought are thus flashed, as it were, into the music and into the heart. But to convey these to a Western ear and understanding, it would be needful to expand the Japanese poem into at least as many words as the following—

“The ‘Morning-glory’
Her leaves and bells has bound
My bucket-handle round.
I could not break the bands
Of those soft hands.
The bucket and the well to her left:
Lend me some water, for I come bereft.”

And so must all the finer and subtler specimens of Japanese art—outside as well as inside its classical poetry—be, as it were, translated and expanded for the general Western comprehension.” (1891b, 293-94)

In the long version above, the well-bucket is so overgrown by a welter of verbiage that it is hard to imagine that the poem was once a haiku at all. But Arnold, a devoted student of Japanese culture who lived in the country for some years and married a Japanese, was convinced that this degree of domestication was the only way to make Japanese poetry comprehensible and even moving to a new and alien audience.³⁵ And he succeeded, at least in the case of Florence Du Cane, who quoted it under her section on the morning glory in *The Flowers and Gardens of Japan* (1908, 181-82).

These, then, were some of the linguistic and cultural obstacles that faced the first Anglophone translators of classical Japanese poetry and continue to do so today. Some early translators became acquainted with Japan by traveling to that country, often in the context of diplomatic or missionary work. Most brought with them the conviction of

Anglo-Saxon superiority and the westward course of empire, and the written works they generated were seen by some politicians as one aspect of the Great Game.³⁶ George Nathaniel Curzon, for example, declared in a speech to the House of Lords in 1909 that “our familiarity, not merely with the languages of the peoples of the East but with their customs, their feelings, their traditions, their history and religion, our capacity to understand what may be called the genius of the East, is the sole basis upon which we are likely to be able to maintain in the future the position we have won.”³⁷

But some of those intent on imposing the Western Will came to be deeply influenced by Japan and to admire its culture. At home, curiosity about the recently opened country blossomed quickly, and the early translations of its poetry were created in concert with the rise of japonisme in the visual arts.³⁸ The choice of a few basic verses here to represent what would become a vast trajectory will, however inadequately, provide something of a control. One is a particularly famous waka composed by Yamabe no Akahito 山部赤人 (fl. 724-36) that appears in *Man'yōshū*, the source of Manzei Shami's poem above. Akahito's verse (*Man'yōshū* 3: 318) appears after a chōka by the same author, for which it functions as an envoy:

| | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| tago no ura yu | At Tago Bay |
| uchiidete mireba | I come into the open and see it: |
| mashiro ni so | pure white |
| fuji no takane ni | on the lofty peak of Fuji |
| yuki wa furikeru | snow has fallen! |

The cultural center of Japan in the 8th century lay in the middle of the country; this is the first known poetic mention of Mount Fuji, which stands hundreds of miles away in what was then the rustic Eastland. Like Akashi Bay, Tago Bay too became a “famous poetic place,” and nearly five centuries later a variant of this well-known verse was included in the *Shinkokinshū* waka anthology (6: 675), compiled by the great literatus Fujiwara no Teika 藤原定家 (Sadaie, 1162-1241) and others after the turn of the 13th century, at the behest of Emperor Gotoba. It was subsequently also included in *Hyakunin isshu* (A hundred poets, a poem apiece) (no. 4), thought to have been compiled by Teika in 1235:³⁹

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| tago no ura ni | Into Tago Bay |
| uchiidete mireba | I set out then see it: |
| shirotae no | white as mulberry cloth |
| fuji no takane ni | on the lofty peak of Fuji |
| yuki wa furitsutsu | snow falls and falls! |

The verses of *Hyakunin isshu* were eventually made into the card game *utagaruta* 歌ガルト (“poem cards”), a pastime akin to Concentration that is traditionally enjoyed during New Year festivities (see below).

In the *Man'yōshū* version, *tago no ura yu* is problematic, given that the word *yu* has been obsolete for centuries.⁴⁰ One interpretation is that the poet is traveling east from the Nara capital along Tago Bay and reaches a place where hills no longer obscure the view and Fuji suddenly appears. Thus *tago no ura yu uchiidete* literally means “at Tago Bay I come into the open.” Some hold that Akahito was viewing the peak from Satta Pass.⁴¹



Yamabe no Akahito and the Tago Bay verse, from a version of *Ogura hyakunin issu* dated 1680, with illustrations by Hishikawa Moronobu 菱川師宣 (1618-94)

Source: <https://www.wdl.org/en/item/2929/>



View of Mount Fuji from Satta Pass

Source: https://shizuoka-guide.com/chinese_t/library/index/detail/556?city=22100

But *tago no ura ni*, the version found in *Shinkokinshū* and *Hyakunin issu*, changes (according to one interpretation) to mean “going out into Tago Bay.” According to that interpretation, therefore, the *Man’yōshū* speaker is walking, but in *Shinkokinshū* and *Hyakunin issu*, he is on board a boat.⁴² The ancient Tago Bay location was also different from today’s, and such textual and geographical uncertainties further complicate premodern translation.

A second difference lies in the third measure, which in the *Man’yōshū* version reads *mashiro ni so*, “pure white.” This is the real center of interest, the dazzling whiteness of the

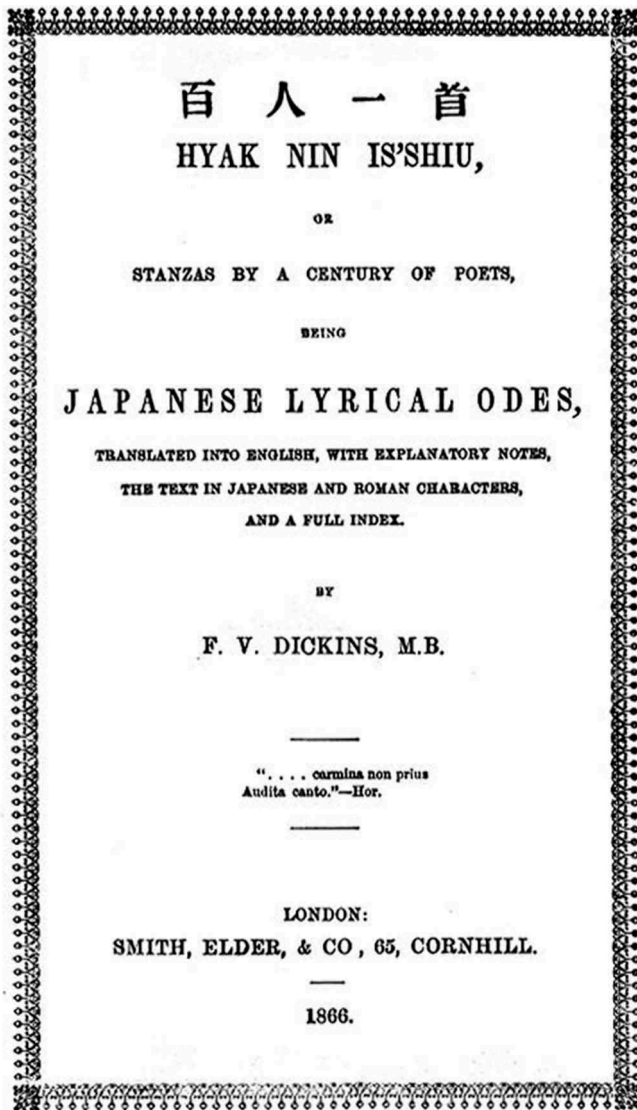
lofty peak, and after the suspense created by *mireba* (lit., look-when) at the end of the second measure (mirrored in English by the colon), the poem recreates the impact of the sudden view in its equally sudden deployment of “pure white” in the center of the verse, followed by the emphatic particle *so* (sometimes read *zo*). Akahito composed the verse as though the event is happening to the poet even as he speaks, and this use of the present tense allows the reader or listener to experience dramatically the event along with him. The effect is augmented in the *Man'yōshū* version by the *-keru* suffix at the end, which indicates current recognition of a pre-existing fact, hence discovery or surprise. But the third measure in *Shinkokinshū* and *Hyakunin isshu* is changed to the antique word *shirotae*, white cloth made from mulberry bark fiber. *Shirotae* is less direct than *mashiro*, but since the word *shirotae* starts with *shiro*, “white,” the fact of startling whiteness is not greatly different. More important, though, is the fact that *shirotae* is an ancient customary epithet (*makurakotoba* 枕詞, lit., pillow word) that accompanies snow (among other words); it echoed with venerability for readers in the medieval period (13th through 16th centuries).

And the endings of the two verses are different as well. As opposed to “snow has fallen [and I notice it now]” in the *Man'yōshū* version, *Shinkokinshū* and *Hyakunin isshu* give *yuki wa furitsutsu*, meaning “snow falls and falls.” Itō Haku (vol. 2, 148) argues that while it is easy to see *fallen* snow on the mountain, it is impossible to see snow actually *falling* on so distant and lofty a peak; it must be that the speaker is seeing the gleaming peak and imagining that snow is continuing to fall there, a conception redolent of medieval “mystery and depth” (*yūgen* 幽玄).

The mention of the great *Man'yōshū* scholar Itō Haku (1925-2003) also reminds us of a crucial debt, which is that all translators, be they foreign or Japanese, who work in classical texts stand on the shoulders of giants. In particular, the poetry in *Man'yōshū* and the myth-histories *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, given its great age and obsolete orthography, has been studied for centuries, and translators today have a vast number of commentaries on which to depend. All translations of the classics are in that sense co-translations, and each new one owes a great debt to its predecessors. And it is necessary as well to acknowledge the translations by Japanese scholars of classical texts into modern Japanese versions (*gendaigoyaku* 現代語訳), which likewise run the gamut from literal to free.

The fame, and the brevity, of the *Hyakunin isshu* collection in which the Tago Bay verse appears made it an obvious choice for English translation by Frederick Victor Dickins (1838-1915), who first went to Japan as a medical officer in 1863 after the arrival of Commodore Matthew C. Perry ten years earlier heralded the beginning of the end of the shogunal policy of seclusion from the West.⁴³ Dickins's initial completed version, serialized in 1865 not under his name but only “a Medical Officer of the Royal Navy” in the journal *Chinese and Japanese Repository of Facts and Events in Science, History, and Art Relating to Eastern Asia*, was the first Japanese book translated in its entirety into English. His version of the poem reads thus (3 [20]: 138):

From where my home,—
 My lonely home,—on Tago's shore
 Doth stand, the wandering eye may roam
 O'er Fusiyama's summit hoar,
 Whose lofty brow
 Is whitened by th'new-fallen snow.



Dickins, *Hyak Nin Is'shiu*

Source: Public Domain

From the perspective of the modern reader, Dickins's rendition is at once naturalized and antiquated in the extreme. But however artificial his language sounds today, it was one standard for poetic diction a century and a half ago, and contemporary audiences did not find it exceptional. Given that environment, Dickins does not feel that he has strayed particularly far from the Japanese original, and he furnishes a note below the verse in which he opines that his poetic version is "almost lit[er]al." He continues thus: "the expression *shiro take*, '*albus et mysteriosus*;' but in this passage it appears to have the meaning of 'loftiness, sublimity, and whiteness.' Found in Man-yo-shiu." The fact that Dickins has mistaken *shirotae* (white mulberry cloth) as *shiro take* is less important than his exacting attempt to account for a word left out of what he otherwise feels to be an almost literal

version. But as no originals are provided, either in Japanese orthography or romanization, the reader cannot know where *shirotae* figures in the poem.

A year later, Dickins was able to publish his *Hyakunin isshu* translation in one volume and under his own name. Though many of the translations therein were extensively revised, again showing his dedication to philological exactitude, his Tago Bay attempt remains the same.⁴⁴ But in a move premonitory of the trend toward increasingly literal translations hereafter, he now makes more effort to show the reader where he has taken liberties in his artistic rendition, providing an Appendix that includes for every poem a “literal version,” a romanization of the original, and even a reproduction of a Japanese version in cursive script. Here is his literal for the Tago Bay verse (1866, Appendix, ii):

*Tago no ura ni uchi-idete mireba, shiro-take no Fuji no taka ne
ni-yuki wa furi-tsutsu.*

LITERAL VERSION.– “Just as I sally out upon the shore of Tago I look round, and lo! the snow has fallen on the high peak of Fuji (Fusi-yama).

By comparison, his artistic version is so free as to be essentially a different poem. The “literal version,” not surprisingly, is much closer to Akahito’s original conception, in which the central focus is the sudden visual impact of the white snow on the peak. As we have just seen, the form of Akahito’s verse brilliantly and dramatically underscores his message, with “white as mulberry cloth” striking the reader dead center and out of nowhere, just as the speaker is suddenly smitten by the sublimity of the scene. But whereas Akahito dramatically shows, Dickins in his artistic version tells, at length, and he adds information, in part to facilitate a rhyme scheme not present in the original. Akahito gives us a more objective description; Dickins renders the scene through the eye of a more personalized narrator. Furthermore, the headnote in *Man’yōshū* to this verse and the long poem to which it is appended makes it clear that the poet was a courtier from the capital (“A verse, with a tanka, composed by Yamabe no Sukune Akahito on viewing Mount Fuji,” *sukune* 宿禰 being a courtly designation), and *Man’yōshū* readers would therefore have imagined the speaker to have made the poem while traveling through the Eastland. Nothing but the poet’s name, though, accompanies the version of the poem in *Hyakunin isshu*, and Dickins thinks that “of [Akahito] nothing is known” other than that he may have flourished in about 715, so he imagines the poem to have been written from the point of view of a local recluse.⁴⁵ The speaker is, after all, not surprised by the vision of Mount Fuji *per se* but by the fact that it has turned white under the snow. But the original does not deflect attention from the main point, the snow, whereas Dickins’s final version creates a seaside rustic whose lonely home has the compensation of a superb view.

The structure of Dickins’s artistic rendition likewise departs wholesale from the original. Akahito’s poem is in standard waka form, but Dickins turns the five measures into six English lines. He preserves a syllabic focus as in the original composition, which is not the norm for English verse (with many exceptions, of course), but instead of 5-7-5-7-7 as in the Japanese, he employs 4-8-8-8-4-8.⁴⁶ And he does not abandon English rhythm, but rather produces a composite syllabic-prosodic meter of duple and tetrameter iambs.⁴⁷ He imposes, moreover, a rhyme scheme that is likewise absent from the original, in a pattern of A-B-A-B-C-C (the C-C here being slant or visual rhyme). Through the rest of the anthology’s hundred waka, which are all, of course, the same length in Japanese, he alternates between 4, 5, 6, and 8 English

lines depending on the amount of matter he feels his version must convey. In terms of structure, then, Dickins's version is not literal, but it *is* analogous (or "equivalent") in its insistence on set organizing principles; for Dickins, as for Akahito, inspiration must be expressed or evoked through prescribed form. Dickins is doing for structure here what he also does for content, naturalizing his rendering to achieve what he hopes will be the same effect through different means—to reflect rather than replicate.

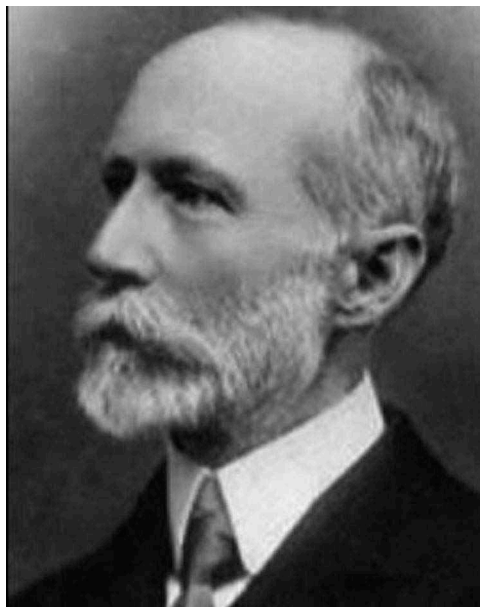
But in the end, Dickins has yet to come to terms with the essential difference between the poetry of the two languages. The image of the poet's home is an invention by the translator that is imposed not once but twice, together with its loneliness. That loneliness, though, is recompensed by the natural beauty of the mountain itself, personified with "summit hoar,/ Whose lofty brow/Is whitened." Dickins at this point in his career is trying to move the text in the direction of extended narrative, rather than focusing on a moment of affective intensity.

In the preface to his volume of 1866 (viii-ix), Dickins also adds a preemptive deprecation, warning his English readers not to expect too much from these *Hyakunin isshu* verses and to condescend to them because they seem to beguile the Japanese:

Finally, I would remind the reader, that the Odes of which the following translation is offered in no way lay claim to any high poetic merit, and are but prettily and somewhat cleverly-rendered metrical expressions of pretty but ordinary sentiments. But, whatever their intrinsic value may be, they are extremely popular with the Japanese, and on that account, rather than for any literary merit they may possess, I have ventured to offer this English version of them to the public.

Dickins later wrote, however, that at the time he first translated *Hyakunin isshu* he read Japanese poetry with love, and this attraction surely accounted for some of the effort his translations required. Translation is, after all, the closest form of reading. We will return to his personal evaluations further on.

The next important collection of translations is contained in the first English study devoted entirely to the history of ancient Japanese verse, *The Classical Poetry of the*



Basil Hall Chamberlain

Source: <http://www.greenshinto.com/wp/2014/08/21/hearn-v-chamberlain/>

Japanese by Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850-1935), published in 1880. A professor of Japanese literature at Tokyo Imperial University (a remarkable position for a foreigner, particularly then), he was a translator, linguist, scholar, and one of the most eminent of the early Japanologists.⁴⁸ While he does not include a version of the Tago Bay poem in his collection, he does give us his rendering of the Akashi Bay verse discussed above (124-25):

With roseate hues that pierce th' autumnal haze
 The spreading dawn lights up Akashi's shore;
 But the fair ship, alas! is seen no more:—
 An island veils it from my loving gaze.

Chamberlain has overtly expanded the focus from travel to include love, and the speaker now seems to be a woman, who watches her lover depart. The poem, furthermore, is now set not in morning mist but beneath a roseate sky, recalling the fact that *akashi* can mean either redden or brighten. His treatment of form is also different, with the verse sporting four-lines in a “closed” A-B-B-A rhyme scheme. And while abandoning the original five-measure form and 5-7 syllabification, he does apply an equivalent syllabic frame in basic groups of 10, which produces syllabic-prosodic lines in iambic pentameter. In terms of invention, the rendition is obviously not far from Dickins's Tago Bay translation; “roseate hues,” “fair ship,” and “loving gaze” are all authorial interpolations evidently called for at least in part by the pentameter. “Autumnal” too is not in the original but was probably suggested by the mist, which by *Kokinshū* times was associated with that season. Like Dickins's effort of 1865, the result is highly naturalized.

In his search for a congenial English metric for Japanese verse, Chamberlain looked to contemporary European poetic examples. But whereas the brief and delicate compass of the 31-syllable waka seemed to him to require a decasyllabic line in English, the heroic long poems of *Man'yōshū* poets like Hitomaro called out for eight-syllable lines of trochaic tetrameter, as in *Man'yōshū* 2: 167, which in his version begin thus:

When began the earth and heaven,
 By the banks of heaven's river
 All the mighty gods assembled,
 All the mighty gods held council,
 Thousand myriads held high council;

Trochaic tetrameter had also been used in translations of the Finnish national epic *Kalevala*, a fact that seems to have influenced the meter of Longfellow's Native American epic, *The Song of Hiawatha* (1855):⁴⁹

By the shores of Gitche Gumee,
 By the shining Big-Sea-Water,
 Stood the wigwam of Nakomis,
 Daughter of the Moon, Nakomis.

Given the vast popularity of Longfellow's epic and the cultural importance of the *Kalevala* to the 19th century trend toward *Volkspoesie*, the trochaic tetrameter of some of Chamberlain's *Man'yōshū* verses in the 1870's was particularly meaningful, as Japan was just then attempting to rise to the world stage and claiming that collection to be the quintessence of its own venerable national spirit.⁵⁰ (In an interesting sidelight, the first translation of the *Kalevala* into a non-European language was into Japanese, by

Morimoto Kakutan 森本覚丹 in 1937.)⁵¹ But however inspired on one level, Chamberlain's choice of meter radically colonizes the Japanese original and gives it overtones Hitomaro obviously never imagined—Japanese emperors and empresses described to the beat of a trochaic Dakota or Ojibway drum.⁵²

After the mid-Victorian translations of these early Orientalists, the poetry translations of the British diplomat and scholar William George Aston (1841-1911) seem, in their form if not always in their diction, as if from another age. They appear in Aston's *A History of Japanese Literature* of 1899, a pioneering overview in English of the entire premodern Japanese literary tradition (as opposed to poetry alone).⁵³ This was fertile period in the history of East-West cross-cultural studies, for it also saw the publication the following year of the influential introduction to Japanese martial spirit *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*, by Nitobe Inazō 新渡戸稲造 (1862-1933). Though Aston mentions in his preface that he had the benefit of the translations of "E. Satow and Mitford" along with those of Dickins and Chamberlain, his approach to the translation of poetry is quite different from the ones seen above, as he himself shows by comparison to Chamberlain's rendering (Aston 1899, 60):⁵⁴

*"Who could it have been
That first gave love
This name?
'Dying' is the plain word
He might well have used."*

Neatly rendered by Mr. Chamberlain:

*"O love! who gave thee thy superfluous name?—
Loving and dying—is it not the same?"*

Here is a romanized version of the original verse, *Kokinshū* 12: 698 (by Kiyohara Fukayabu 清原深養父) together with a slightly different new translation:

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| koishi to wa | Who was the first |
| ta ga nazukemu | to call longing |
| koto naramu | by that name? |
| shinu to zo tada ni | Better had he |
| iubekarikeru | simply called it death. |

The last two measures present a problem of barbarization and naturalization for the translator, for Aston's "Dying is the plain word/He might well have used" is closer to the original, whereas "Better had he/simply called it death" is stronger in the target language, but backwards syntactically.

Aston's verse above is demonstrative of the transition in Anglophone translation practice that was just beginning to take place on the part of some practitioners. As opposed to Chamberlain's clever but highly naturalized rhymed couplet, Aston's verse is now closer to the Japanese original, not only in its division into five lines and its avoidance of rhyme, but also in its diction that is here moving away from mid-19th-century "poetic" vocabulary.⁵⁵ He does not include either the Akashi Bay or the Tago Bay poems in his work, but his version of Manzei Shami 's on life and a disappearing boat is likewise literal (47):

*"To what shall I compare
This life of ours?
It is like a boat*

*Which at daybreak rows away
And leaves no trace behind it."*

Though he chooses to emphasize the disappearance of the boat rather than the boat's wake, this is a distinction without a real difference.

And yet in the end Aston is a transitional figure, as in other poems he mixes his groundbreaking five-line format and literal interpretation with earlier "poetic" diction, as here (83):

*"O thou bird of Miyako!
If such be thy name,
Come! this question I would ask thee—
Is she whom I love
Still alive, or is she no more?"*

And despite the fact that Aston allowed the form of the Japanese originals to shape his own versions to some extent, he still assessed the poetry he was translating not on its own terms but on the basis of comparison to English verse. He writes, for example, the following: "Narrow in its scope and resources, [Japanese poetry] is chiefly remarkable for its limitations—for what it has not, rather than for what it has" (24). Some pages later he continues, "A feature which strikingly distinguishes the Japanese poetic muse from that of Western nations is a certain lack of imaginative power" (30).

Aston's approach to form, though not his pejorative assessment of content, was immediately exploited by the first American translator to appear here, Clay MacCauley (1843-1925), who served in Japan as a Unitarian minister for 25 years before returning to his home country, ending his days in Berkeley, California. His *"Hyakunin-Isshu: Single Songs of a Hundred Poets"* also appeared in 1899, and in it he acknowledges Aston's work together with that of Dickens, Chamberlain, other sources in German and French, and the indirect help of a Japanese scholar via notes provided to him by Ernest Satow.



Clay MacCauley

Source: https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/758842.Clay_MacCauley

MacCauley considers his literal approach to be the hallmark of his publication, which bears the subtitle “Literal Translations into English with Renderings According to the Original Metre,” meaning that for each poem he provides a very literal version which is also meant to inform the “metrical translation” that follows. He elaborates on this in his introduction (1899, xxii): “The translations themselves are, as strictly as is possible for English renderings, made literal, both in prose and in metrical form. The metrical renderings have been attempted as exact reproductions of the original measures of the ‘tanka,’ and, where possible with fidelity to literalness, have been clothed in poetic terms.”

His approach to the translation of the *Hyakunin isshu* poems followed a personal trajectory from more naturalized to more literal renderings, a trajectory common to the careers of many other early translators. He writes in his preface that he had first “rendered a large part of the poems into the form of English quatrains.” It was only several years later that he discovered Dickins’s “versified paraphrases,” at which point he was moved by contrast to recast his poems into the more literal format he describes above. In pursuit of this goal, he adopts Aston’s five-line format to reflect the five measures of the originals, and (innovatively) he models them on the Japanese meter of 5-7-5-7 and 7 syllables. He is also forward-looking in that, like Aston, he eschews rhyme. And while he grants that the Japanese measure does not share the metered cadence of English, he nevertheless feels in it “the movement of some of the simpler measures of English poetry,” and so he shapes his lines in iambic trimeter and tetrameter, generating a syllabic-prosodic amalgam in shorter and longer quantities” (xv).

The Tago Bay verse reads like this in MacCauley’s version (7-8):⁵⁶

Tago no ura
Ni uchi-idete mireba
Shirotae no
Fuji no takane ni
Yuki wa furi-tsutsu

LITERAL TRANSLATION:–

| | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Uchi-idete ni</i> | | <i>ura no Tago</i> |
| Going out to | | the coast of Tago, |
| <i>mireba</i> | <i>yuki</i> | <i>wa furi-tsutsu</i> |
| when I see | snow | at the same |
| | <i>ni</i> | <i>takane</i> |
| time falling | on | the high peak |
| <i>no</i> | <i>shirotae no</i> | <i>Fuji</i> |
| of | pure-white | Fuji. |

[Commentary]

METRICAL TRANSLATION:–

BEAUTY MADE PERFECT.

When to Tago’s coast
 I my way have ta’en, and see
 Perfect whiteness laid
 On Mount Fuji’s lofty peak
 By the drift of falling snow.

In terms of diction, however, his “metrical translation” shares more with Dickins and Chamberlain than with some of Aston’s leaner attempts. His choice of iambic stress was the probable cause of the reversed syntax of the second line and the syncope of “ta’en” (which gives the line an antiquated overtone not in the original) and the addition of the extraneous “drift off” at the end. “Beauty Made Perfect” is his own addition; he added similar titles to each of the other verses in the sequence. This too is a domesticating impulse to reflect English poetic practice; waka may be accompanied by headnotes, topic identifications, and author’s names, but they generally do not have titles in the English sense of the term.⁵⁷ Such titles can condition reader interpretation. And while, like Dickins, he approaches his topic as a careful scholar and teacher, providing vocabulary and notes, he appears to conflate the *Man’yōshū* and the *Shinkokinshū/Hyakunin isshu* versions: his translation “pure white” for *shirotae* applies to *mashiro* instead (*shirotae* being white mulberry cloth), a mistake he compounds in the metrical translation with “perfect whiteness laid.”

His notion of form is also mistaken, for he divides the first and second measures erroneously so as to begin the latter with a grammatical particle. This creates for him a nine-syllable second measure (*ni-u-chi-i-de-te-mi-re-ba*) which he must justify by asserting that “in the verse *ni uchi-idete mireba* the terminal and initial vowel sounds of the first three words flow together, *ni-u* becoming *nyu* and *chi-idete* become *ch’-idete*. The nine syllables are thus reduced in reading to the normal seven” (8).⁵⁸ This comment is valuable in drawing the reader’s attention to the effect of verbal delivery on meter, but it is mistaken; measures cannot begin with grammatical particles. Again, the second measure is actually just *uchiidete mireba*, with *chi* and *i* combining, through synalepha, to create the requisite seven syllabic beats. Likewise in the first measure, *tago no ura ni*, the *no* and *u* elide to create five. His English version in addition misrepresents the original syntax, as it is an incomplete sentence. Still, MacCauley’s version is groundbreaking in its inclusion of a word-for-word rendition and a metrical one that reflects the original syllable count, both of which continue the trajectory toward more literal representation seen in some of Aston’s work.

The more literal five-line approach of Aston and MacCauley was also used by William N. Porter (1849-1929) ten years later in *A Hundred Verses from Old Japan* (1909, 4):

I STARTED off along the shore,
 The sea shore at Tago,
 And saw the white and glist’ning peak
 Of Fuji all aglow
 Through falling flakes of snow.

Porter also mirrors the 5-7-5-7-7 morae format of the original, though in an inverted fashion, employing tetrameter and trimeter iambic lines of 8-6-8-6 and 6 syllables, with the shorter English lines rhymed and indented. The uppercase incipit is his own naturalizing touch and not present in the original. Porter is well aware, however, of the compromises necessary in both barbarization and naturalization, writing that he developed his format “in the hope of retaining at least some resemblance to the original form, while making the sound more familiar to English readers (iv).”

In another translation Porter published three years later, *The Tosa Diary* (1912), he adopts an even more Procrustian formula, translating the verses with an analogous 5-7-

5-7-7 syllabic scheme. He modestly but puckishly elaborates on this new format in his introduction (1912, 9):

In the translation I have retained the original metre, and introduced a rhyme in the last couplet to emphasize the caesura between the third and fourth lines of the Japanese. It is a wellnigh hopeless task to attempt a translation of Japanese verses, which, while retaining the metre, is true to the original both in spirit and in letter, and it would not be fair to the illustrious poet to judge his work by the English version given here. Perhaps I may paraphrase Tsurayuki as follows: "People who read it will say to themselves that this kind of stuff is very poor. But the translator produced it with a good deal of difficulty, so they should stop whispering such cruel things about it."

Remarkably, he also provides an *en face* romanized version of the entire work, the prose as well as the poetry, to compensate for the perceived shortcomings of the translated version.

The effort Porter imposed on himself to reflect the form of the original texts was noteworthy, but as he admits, it forced the style and content of his translations to bend to the will of the structure. In his Tago Bay rendition, for example, his repetition of "the shore/The sea shore" is not in the original, and "white and glist'ning" is an elaboration. But he became more literal, at least in terms of form, as his career progressed, moving from an inverted correspondence of long and short lines to an identical 5-7-5-7-7 syllabic framework. And the caveat that he provides to the readers of his *Hundred Verses* is prescient: "Japanese poetry differs very largely from anything we are used to" (1909, iii). That observation, obvious as it is, echoes the gathering change in the relationship between text, translator, and audiences that has been delineated above. Translated verse is now changing less to suit the reader, and the reader is being encouraged to change more instead.

And yet the seeds of Japanese poetry were falling on very fertile Romantic soil. Both traditions are primarily concerned with emotional intensity. Central to that lyric perspective is nature, either for its own sake or as a backdrop or metaphor for human concerns. Both traditions also share the technique of juxtaposing a natural scene and a human lyric response, as in the beginning of Tennyson's "Break, Break, Break" of 1835 (which also exemplifies the "poetic" diction of some of the work of the period).⁵⁹

Break, break, break,
 On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
 And I would that my tongue could utter
 The thoughts that arise in me.

In the Tago Bay poem, the traveler is suddenly struck by the view of the lofty white cone of Fuji. This too is an affective response on the part of the speaker to a natural phenomenon, and he is moved to give that response poetic expression. But Akahito dramatically implies its effect on the speaker rather than spelling it out, as Tennyson does.

And in both traditions, there is a focus on the self, and the reader is encouraged to construe the poem as an expression of the poet's own emotions. The relationship of a natural scene and its effect on a living poet was notably set forth by Ki no Tsurayuki 紀貫之 (ca. 866/872-945) in his "Kana Preface" to *Kokinshū*, which begins by insisting that "Japanese poetry takes the human heart as seed and burgeons forth into a myriad words," which is to say that on some level poems express the emotion that wells up in the heart of the actual poet. Naturally poems can still be composed on hypothetical subjects and events, but even in those cases they are taken to be emotional responses on some level by the poet to the universal truths underlying those subjects and events.

Poetry in mid-century England was in general considered an important but at the same time popular art form, agreeable and consolatory. This was also true in the ancient Japanese court. Few outside the court and the Buddhist establishment were literate in the early classical period, but among court aristocrats an appreciation of poetry and its importance to expression and consolation was universal. In addition, the contrast that Dickins artificially established between the speaker's invented lonely home and the compensatory grandeur of its natural surroundings also fell on sympathetic European ears, which were accustomed to verses addressing the growing breach between untrammelled nature and urban life during the Industrial Revolution.⁶⁰

While Porter was translating in a mid-Victorian vein (a hugely generalized category) for a popular audience, he sent those who wanted a "more scholarly translation" to Dickins, and those who wanted a more "literal translation" to MacCauley. But this reference to the "scholarly" and the "literal" clearly shows that by 1909, a closer and better informed treatment of Japanese waka was becoming an alternative to the heavily ornamented and semantically free domesticated versions of earlier translators.

Nor was this development lost on the earlier translators introduced here, who after the turn of the 20th century moved (to varying degree) toward more literal approaches in their translation theory and practice. Dickins, for example, reworked his Tago Bay verse not once but twice, for his *Primitive and Mediaeval Japanese Texts* of 1906 and for a revised and abridged version of *Hyakunin isshu* also included in that volume.⁶¹ Now, four decades after his original translation of the Tago Bay verse, Dickins has available to him the authoritative commentary *Man'yōshū kogi* by Kamochi Masakazu (1791-1858), which was posthumously published in 1891. Dickins acknowledges his "great indebtedness" to Kamochi "above all," and even provides a short biography of him at the end of an introduction of more than one hundred pages to *Man'yōshū* and its age. With regard to Yamabe no Akahito, Dickins now provides more background, pointing out that *sukune* is a courtly title and that Akahito "visited the Eastland, and it was on this journey that he composed the well-known stanza on the view of Fuji from Tago Bay" (1906, xcix-c).

The two newer versions read thus (on the left, as they appear with the unfortunate line breaks caused by the two-column format of the book, and on the right, in corrected form):

Poem A (55)

On Tago's strand
I wander forth to gaze—
lo, whitest white
high Fuji's summit shineth
with white snow newly
fallen!

On Tago's strand
I wander forth to gaze—
lo, whitest white
high Fuji's summit shineth
with white snow newly fallen!

Poem B (308)

On Tago's strand
I wend me forth and gaze
on
the peak of Fuji
and the firstling snows of
autumn

On Tago's strand
I wend me forth and gaze on
the peak of Fuji
and the firstling snows of autumn
I see on Fuji sparkling



A page from Porter, *A Hundred Verses from Old Japan*. The illustrations were taken from an edition of *Hyakunin isshu* “which probably dates from the end of the eighteenth century” lent to Porter by F. V. Dickins
Source: Porter, *A Hundred Verses from Old Japan*

I see on Fuji sparkling.

Both versions are more literal and more accurate than his earlier attempt. Dickins’s Poem A above seems to be a translation of the *Man’yōshū* version, with its arresting “whitest white” (*mashiro*) now in the middle, where it so effectively appears in the original. And here too, correctly, the snow has fallen (*furikeru*) instead of falls and falls (*furitsutsu*) as it does in the *Shinkokinshū/Hyakuin isshu* version. Poem B, which appears in the abridged version of *Hyakuin isshu* contained in his new anthology, is less accurate, without the frappant “white mulberry cloth” [*shirotae*] of the original, which was perhaps deemed untranslatable. It also adds the extraneous “sparkling” and also the precious “wend me forth,” perhaps to generate seven syllables in the second line, and “firstling,” to do the same in the fourth.

In structure, though, the verses have moved much closer to the originals, adopting a five-line format. Dickins explicitly informs the reader that “in the translations of the Lays the syllabic metre of the Japanese text is exactly followed” (cviii). In fact, it is not always exactly followed, as above, but it is generally achieved or approximated, which is a major change from his earlier versions. And due to the shortness of these new lines, the iambic meter is attenuated, but with a general duple-triple metrical feel that approaches the syllable count of the original. Furthermore, the lines now do not all start with capital letters, which is a major concession to the essentially different natures of the English line and the Japanese measure. This too will

become a frequently adopted feature of later translations. Of the two, Poem A is closer to the original, with less padding and less imposition of English poetic preconceptions. Except for the dated “lo” and “shineth,” it still stands up today, a century later.

Dickins explained his new and more literal approach thus:

With Old Japanese ... an approach to a literal version is, not seldom, quite feasible, if only the order of words be in proper measure reversed, and due allowance made for poetic inversions. I have tried to avoid what I believe to be the chief blemishes incident to translation from an oriental tongue—paraphrase and the replacement of eastern by western modes of thought and diction ... My aim, generally, has been to render the whole thought of the original texts, preserving as much as possible of their decoration, colour, and distinctive impersonality, even of their conventionalisms, without loss of their essential simplicity. (vi-vii)

Dickins also imposed his newly formed literal ideal on the German translations of Karl Florenz, which he reviewed in 1907 (714):

A need of attention to the subtleties of literary Japanese is shown by the versions of the *tanka* on p. 289, which are inadequate. Professor Florenz translates.⁶²

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Kusa mo ki mo</i> | Gräser und Bäume |
| <i>iro kawaredomo</i> | haben Farben gewechselt |
| <i>watatsumi no</i> | doch an des Meeres |
| <i>nami no hana ni zo</i> | Wellenblumen vermagst du |
| <i>aki nakarikeru</i> | den Herbst nicht zu erkennen. |

A more literal rendering is better—

Herbs too and trees too
their tints are changing,
yet in the wave-flowers
(the white crests of ocean-waves)
showeth not Autumn.

That is—“Autumn shows in the fading tints of flower and leaf, but never in the changeless white of the cresting waves”

The poem in question is *Kokinshū* 5: 249, by Fun'ya no Yasuhide 文屋康秀 (d. 885?). It must be added, though, that regardless of Dickins's desire for a more literal representation of the poem's content than Florenz's, the German version is very literal in terms of format, with the Japanese on the left and the translation on the right, both in five parts, and with the 5-7-5-7-7 structure of the original applied to the translation as well. This form would prove to be an enduring one.

Over the course of his career, therefore, Dickins changed considerably; in 1865 he adapted the structure and content of his translations to mid-19th-century English poetic expectations; by 1906 he was letting the content and form of the originals dictate to a greater extent the format of his English and also trying to avoid Orientalist exoticism. In fact, he was even willing on occasion to force the reader out of his or her comfort zone in the interest of accuracy, warning that the “construction of the Japanese text has been preserved as much as possible (even at the risk, occasionally, of some little trouble to the reader), being essential to a true version” (1906, viii). His work also suggests how tightly knit was the small world of Western Japanese scholars and translators at that time, and how quickly standards were changing in *fin-de-siècle* literary taste. His original book of 1866 was a prodigy of scholarship for the period, but by MacCauley's time a generation

later its poems sounded dated, prompting Dickins to attempt his own revisions with more literal content, leaner vocabulary, and a five-line format.

And yet in Dickins's case, familiarity ended in contempt. In his last years he wrote, "I now know that my falling in love with things Japanese in the early [18]60s was a terrible misfortune for me—there is nothing in Japanese literature to compensate one for the energy and time lost in its mere decipherment" (Kornicki 1999, 75). He added that "in sober truth, the lays cannot be said to form an addition to the world's literature" (Dickins 1906, xxix). In the end, he returned to Latin and Greek. But it was fortunate from the point of view of literary history that he loved and lost, as his contributions were remarkable for their time.

Likewise Basil Hall Chamberlain later came to embrace the more literal translation philosophy. After thirty years, he revised his groundbreaking history of Japanese verse, and in the new edition, entitled simply *Japanese Poetry*, he writes that in the earlier version—his "maiden effort"—he now feels that he "allowed himself too much freedom." He continues thus: "the writer's taste has changed. He has gone over to the camp of the literalists, and cares for no versions whether of prose or of poetry, unless they be scrupulously exact" (1910, vii).⁶³

It was also in this year that Clara A. Walsh published her *Master-Singers of Japan*, in which this version of Chiyo's morning-glory poem appears (1910, 100):

All round the rope a morning glory clings;
How can I break its beauty's dainty spell?
I beg for water from a neighbour's well.

Her version is less than half the length of Edwin Arnold's of two decades before, and the three measures of the original are now reflected in her lineation. But that being said, she still imposes a six-beat iambic stress to each line, along with an A-B-B rhyme. The meter and rhyme in turn still force expansions of the original content, with the second line being an entire invention of her own that adds the notion of the flower's "dainty spell." From the point of view of accuracy, her first and third lines alone would have worked quite well, "showing" rather than "telling". In the end, no rhythm and no rhyme still for her meant no poetry, but she works in a briefer compass than Arnold had. And she too was very much aware of the compromises she was making:

In times when everything relating to the history and literature of Japan has become of such vivid interest to the people of this allied Island-Empire, these attempted renderings into English of well-known Japanese poems may prove acceptable, especially to those who may not have time or opportunity to study the works of great Oriental scholars. The dainty grace and beauty of the original poems, with their impressionist word-pictures, are unfortunately easily lost in the endeavour to "English" them. It is scarcely possible to convey the full meaning of the shorter poems to English readers, without elaboration of the original theme, when at once they cease to be "Japanesque." (13)

It will not do to indulge in "chronological snobbery."⁶⁴ Nor will one style of translation satisfy all reader requirements. Walsh was not writing for the scholarly or the avant-garde but for middle-of-the-road poetry lovers reading for pleasure and out of curiosity about a Far Eastern nation with which Britain had signed an alliance in 1902 then renewed in 1905. She acknowledges basing her work on Dickins and Aston and having benefited from the advice of the great popularizer of Zen in the West, D. T. Suzuki

(Suzuki Daisetsu Teitarō 鈴木大拙貞太郎, 1870-1966). She also cites Chamberlain. Her mention of “impressionist word pictures” suggests too that she was familiar with modern aesthetic ideas, and she knew what her versions sacrificed. And yet, while much briefer than Arnold’s verse, her rendition is still in a free and ornate style; doubtless she hoped that such a form would have something of the same effect on her Edwardian readers that she imagined Chiyo’s poem to have had on hers.⁶⁵

As Walsh indicates at the start of her comments above, contemporary changes in attitude toward the poetic translation of Japanese coincided with a growing public penchant for things Japanese and the stirrings of a more accurate and balanced appreciation of its arts that began to transcend mere Gilbertian exoticism. In the Western mind, Japan was becoming somewhat more of a real place with real people and less of an Orientalist fantasy, though much of its mystery remained in the popular imagination.⁶⁶

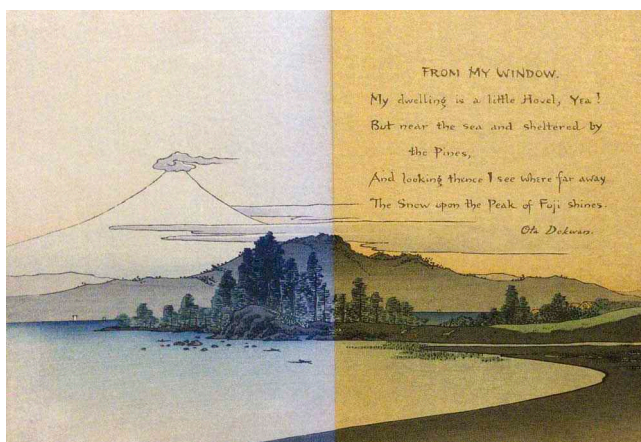
It seems possible that for some the incipient shift in translation style was gradually stimulated in part by the nature of the Japanese poetry they were translating. But changing Western attitudes toward Japan, brought about partly by early translations themselves, surely provided an increasingly congenial space for the development of more literal English renditions on the part of the translators who followed. And by adhering more closely to the ancient Japanese originals in terms of form and content, by “making it old,” so to speak, they were also loosening the grip of their English poetic past and paradoxically anticipating the call now associated with the Modernists to “make it new.”

This changing attitude toward translation was part of the monumental shift in human perception and representation around the turn of the 20th century that was manifest in the art world by the rise of a new avant-garde. Its rejection of the Victorian status quo and its search for new models further stimulated interest in the visual and literary arts of Japan, which went on to exert a strong influence on those of Europe and America, as the studies of Earl Miner and David Ewick, among others, have amply demonstrated.⁶⁷ Then, in a sort of feedback loop, the new English poetry that resulted in turn inspired new approaches to Anglophone translation of the poetry of Japan. Progressive artists called into question extraneous verbal decoration, as manifest in the case of architecture by Adolf Loos’s essay “Ornament and Crime” of 1908. Instead, in poetry as in Louis Sullivan’s architectural dictum, it was now deemed essential to the modern aesthetic that form follow function.

One of the first poets to draw the attention of avant-garde writers to Japanese models was F. S. Flint (1885-1960), who in 1908 published a review of recent books on poetry that included the first volume of *Sword and Blossom Poems from the Japanese*, by Shotaro Kimura and Charlotte M. A. Peake (1907-10).⁶⁸ Flint, an important figure in the history of the Imagist movement, provides two “literal renderings” of haiku to illustrate the possibilities of the Japanese form, one of which reads thus:

A fallen petal
Flies back to its branch:
Ah! a butterfly!

The original is by Arakida Moritake 荒木田守武 (1473-1549), a late medieval poet who famously helped raise the literary status of the *haikai* genre (see n. 31). It reads as follows, word for word:



Mount Fuji, in Kimura and Peake, *Sword and Blossom Poems from the Japanese*. The waka is by the medieval daimyo Ōta Dōkan 太田道灌 (1432–86), from whose domain Mount Fuji is visible. The original reads *wa ga io wa matsubara tsuzuki umi chikaku fuji no takane o nokiba ni zo miru*

Source: Public Domain

rakka eda ni | kaeru to mire-ba | kochō kana
 fallen blossoms branch to | return appears-when | butterflies !

In view of Flint's literal version, spare and unadorned, it is not surprising that his review expresses disappointment with the older style of Kimura and Peake that for him obfuscates the essence of the originals: "it is a pity ... that the translators did not choose some other measure than the heavy English rhymed quatrain," for "it is probable that nearly all the spontaneity of the Japanese tanka has thus been lost" (Flint 1908, 212). (Kimura and Peake do not include this Moritake verse.) In short, for Modernists among the new generation, the style that had sounded pleasantly poetic for earlier translators and their readers now simply sounded antiquated.

Flint seems to have based his translation not directly on the Japanese but on a French version in a groundbreaking study of haikai by Paul-Louis Couchoud (1879-1959) that had first appeared two years previously entitled "Les Haïkaï: Épigrammes poétiques du Japon." Jan Hokenson calls this "one of the most influential essays in French and European japonisme" (2004, 249). Couchoud renders the verse in a literal style that indeed prefigures Flint's English (1906: 193):

Un pétale tombé
 Remonte à sa branche:
 Ah! c'est un papillon!

There were, however, earlier translations of this iconic verse also available to Flint and Couchoud in English. Already in 1899, W. G. Aston had put it thus (290):

*"Thought I, the fallen flowers
 Are returning to their branch;
 But lo! they were butterflies."*



W. G. Aston

Source: Public Domain

Then in 1902 Basil Hall Chamberlain had produced this:

*Rakkwa eda ni
Kaeru to mireba
Kochō kana*

Fall'n flow'r returning to the branch,—
Behold! it is a butterfly.

Chamberlain evidently felt that the verse, as alliterative in his translation as it is in the original, needed explanation, for he added beneath it, "I.e. For a moment I fancied it to be a fallen petal flying back, by some miracle, to its native branch. But lo! it was a butterfly" (1902, 312).⁶⁹

The translations conveniently chart the fast pace of contemporary evolution in translation practice. Though Chamberlain's version appeared three years after Aston's, his is the more retardataire in terms of diction, with its syncope and its Biblical and ponderous "Behold!" Aston's language is less Victorian, save for the "lo!" and perhaps the inverted "thought I." Couchoud and Flint then employ language that is completely neutral. The same development is seen in terms of structure: Chamberlain prefers the couplet, as a haiku is half the length of a waka, for which he uses the quatrain (a choice for which Flint criticizes Kimura and Peake in his review noted above). Aston, again, is closer to the original in his use of three lines, as are Couchoud and Flint. And line length progressively shortens; Chamberlain prefers lines of eight syllables in this example (interpreting "fall'n" and "flow'r" as one syllable each), whereas Aston uses seven. Couchoud and Flint then shrink their compass further to five-syllable lines (if Couchoud's final "Ah!" is construed as

a supernumerary expostulation), which most closely adheres to the 5-7-5 of the original. In sum, Chamberlain naturalizes the most of the three, which is also indicated by his additional explanatory note to help Western readers get the point. Aston is more willing to let the original shape his version, and Couchoud and Flint even more so, providing the most literal versions of the four.

But compared to Dickins or Arnold, even Chamberlain is more concise, with no extraneous invention; perhaps he was already here beginning to go over “to the camp of the literalists,” as he would write eight years later. Couchoud himself makes reference to Chamberlain in his own article on haikai of 1906, which again draws attention to the symbiosis between English and French poetic ideas occurring at that time (indeed, Flint in his review also compares the suggestivity of Japanese poetry to the style of Stéphane Mallarmé, who was also fond of japonisme; see n. 38).

As will be made clear below, however, this trajectory toward literal translation did not immediately carry all before it. Flint notes in his review of *Sword and Blossom Poems from the Japanese* this divergence in taste between the proponents of the naturalized and the literal: “I could have wished that the poems in this book had been translated into little dropping rhythms, unrhymed; but the translators thought it due to the English Cerberus that they should be ‘done into English verse’” (1908, 213). And two years later Laurence Binyon (1869-1943) gently critiqued Walsh for the same reason, writing in a review in *The Times Literary Supplement* that “her renderings overflow the bounds of the original and use too many words; but musical cadences and happy phrases are frequent” (1910, 41).⁷⁰



The old Print Room in the White Wing of the British Museum, 1914. Laurence Binyon, in the foreground, pages through a book, and Arthur Waley, seated on the right at the table in the center, looks at the camera. Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.

Source: https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/4069.Arthur_Waley

Accompanying this shift was a rising Western interest in the shorter Japanese poetic forms, those least like traditional English verse. After completing his early translations of the 31-syllable waka poems in *Hyakunin isshu*, Frederick Victor Dickins had focused his subsequent energies in *Primitive and Mediaeval Japanese Texts* primarily on the “long lays” (chōka). Not only did the long form have a scope and grandeur that spoke to devotees of Tennyson and his ilk, but it was also the artistic product of an era that Dickins took to be one of pure Japanese spirit, before the centuries of etiolating influences from Chinese literature. In this he was in step with the Japanese Scholars of National Learning (Kokugakusha) of the Edo period (1600-1868) like Kamo no Mabuchi and Motoori Norinaga, who revived interest on the part of Japanese poets and scholars in ancient works like *Man'yōshū* and *Kojiki*. But as foreign readers came to be better acquainted with Japanese poetry and take it more seriously, they turned not to the forms that were the most akin to traditional Western literature but to those that were the most different, the waka and the haiku.⁷¹

Japan at the same time was experiencing social and cultural change on an even greater scale as it struggled to modernize and Westernize while the West was at the same time likewise transforming, but also to preserve Japanese cultural traditions and national identity. And its policy of seclusion from the West had given way in a few brief decades to energetic and sometimes violent activity on the world stage. Its victory over Russia in the war of 1904-05, the first time a nation of the Far East had overcome a modern Western power and the occasion of the largest sea and land battles to date, shook comfortable European and American assumptions of superiority. The victory also ironically paved the way for the better informed and less condescending attitudes toward Japanese arts mentioned above.⁷² This was recognized by contemporary intellectuals such as Binyon (1910, 41):

The claim of Japan to possess civilization has been but slowly and grudgingly admitted by the Western world. Now that on battlefields marked by slaughter on a vast scale [Japan] has defeated a great European Power [Russia], the peoples of Europe have grown less critical of her credentials, and incline to surmise that, after all, this singular nation, secluded for so long from the rest of the world, may be only a little behind themselves in refinement and humanity. We have already begun to take a different and more serious view of the art of Japan than that which prevailed a decade or two ago, and now even her poetry may come to be studied with respect.

He goes on to take explicit issue with Dickins’s “very unfair exaggeration” that Japanese poetry is not “an addition to the world’s poetry,” arguing instead that “to certain aspects of beauty the Japanese mind is exquisitely sensitive. Indeed, there is a vein of imaginative feeling in these old poems of far-away Japan which we scarcely find in Europe till Wordsworth.”

Okakura Kakuzō 岡倉覚三 (Tenshin 天心, 1863-1913), whose seminal writings in English like *The Book of Tea* (1906) contributed much to the growing Western familiarity with Japan, took note of the irony: “He [the average Westerner] was wont to regard Japan as barbarous while she indulged in the gentle arts of peace: he calls her civilised since she began to commit wholesale slaughter on Manchurian battlefields” (7).⁷³ Ironic as well is the fact that the Russian émigré Nikolai Bakhtin (1894-1950), brother of the celebrated literary theoretician Mikhail, should produce a Russian translation of *Hyakuin isshu* in the year the war ended.

The Japanese themselves were profoundly sensitive to Western power and opinion (“Western” being a convenient catch-all for America and the advanced nations of Europe, *Ōbei* 欧米 in Japanese). They had witnessed the imposition of treaty ports in Qing China, then personally suffered the unequal treaties following the forcible opening of their own country, and then the indignity of the Triple Intervention after their victory in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. And in more recent years they had been insulted by movements in the United States to limit or ban Japanese immigration. Seeking to capitalize on the change in European and American opinion after the victory over Russia and the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, Japan financed in 1910 the huge Japan-British Exhibition in London that fed the vogue for Japanese culture. Perhaps the republication of Chamberlain’s *Japanese Poetry* and the publication of Walsh’s *The Master-Singers of Japan* in 1910 were meant to coincide with the event.

Among the Japanese artists and intellectuals who were intent on achieving Western respect was the above-mentioned Okakura. Another was the politician and intellectual Suematsu Kenchō 末松謙澄 (1855-1920), who set to work translating part of *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari*, ca. 1008) into English while a law student at Cambridge, to introduce it to a foreign world still ignorant of the majesty of that classic.⁷⁴ Suematsu’s translations of the waka in *Genji* were made at the same time that Chamberlain was making his waka translations for his volume of Japanese poetry, and they are much of a piece; Suematsu likewise prefers the quatrain form with antique diction. And he rhymes all the lines as well (though in A-B-A-B form, rather than Chamberlain’s A-B-B-A, which better



Suematsu Kenchō

Source: <http://www.01-radio.com/vision/2015/11/01/151101-06/>

reflects the upper and lower parts of the original). But he does not adopt Chamberlain's decasyllabic approach, instead choosing simply to alternate long and short iambic lines. Here is the first poem in the tale, where Genji's dying mother composes a verse for his father the emperor, who is lamenting her imminent demise (Suematsu 1882, 5):

Since my departure for this dark journey,
 Makes you so sad and lonely,
 Fain would I stay though weak and weary,
 And live for your sake only!

Given that Suematsu's work came out only two years after Chamberlain's *Japanese Poetry*, it would not be at all surprising if Suematsu consulted it.

Still another was Yone Noguchi (Noguchi Yonejirō 野口米次郎, 1875-1947), who became the first Japanese to publish poetry in English. Unlike Suematsu, who turned Japanese into "poetic" Victorian English, Noguchi encouraged Anglophones to make their own poetry more Japanese, writing as early as 1904 in "A Proposal to American Poets," "Pray, you try Japanese Hokku, my American poets! You say far too much, I should say."⁷⁵ Noguchi was equally critical of previous translations of Japanese poetry into English, which in his opinion obfuscated with excess verbiage the essence of the originals. Here, for example, is his critique of William N. Porter:

What would you say if somebody ventured to imitate with someone's fountain pen the Japanese picture drawn with the bamboo brush and incensed Indian ink? Is it not again the exact case with the translator like Mr. William N. Porter in *A Year of Japanese Epigrams*?⁷⁶

We confess that we have shown, to speak rather bluntly, very little satisfaction even with the translations of Prof. Chamberlain and the late Mr. Aston; when I say that I was perfectly amazed at Mr. Porter's audacity in his sense of curiosity, I hope that my words will never be taken as sarcasm. With due respect, I dare say that nearly all things of that book leave something to be desired for our Japanese mind, or to say more true, have something too much that we do not find in the original, as a result they only weaken, confuse and trouble the real atmosphere; while perhaps, it means certainly that the English mind is differently rooted from the Japanese mind, even in the matter of poetry which is said to have no East or West. When I appear to unkindly expose Mr. Porter's defects (excuse my careless use of word) to the light, that is from my anxiety to make this Japanese poetry properly understood. To take a poem or two from his book at random:



Yone Noguchi

Source: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/yone-noguchi>

MAKE IT NEW

ESSAYS BY
EZRA POUND

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日
新

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Uzumibi ya
Kabe ni wa kyaku (not kaku) no
Kage-boshi. Basho.

Mr. Porter translates it as follows:

"Alas! My fire is out,
And there's a shadow on the wall—
A visitor, no doubt.

I should like to know who would ever think of the above as poetry, even poor poetry, in his reading of it in one breath; what does "no doubt" (which the original hasn't) mean except that it rhymes with the first line; and the rhyme cheapens the poetry at least to the Japanese mind from the reason of its English conventionality. (1914b, 142-43)

Noguchi is exactly right, and not only because the poem should be translated along the lines of "The fire's embers—on the wall, a guest's shadow." For decades the Japanese had been disparaged by the West as they struggled to modernize and Westernize in the 19th c; now English translators who were likewise struggling to acculturate themselves and their readership to the East were getting a taste of their own medicine.

He continues in this vein in *The Spirit of Japanese Poetry* (1914a, 49-50), only now his targets are the translations by Arnold and Walsh of Chiyo's morning-glory poem:

With due respect to these translators, I ask myself why the English mind must spend so much ink while we Japanese are well satisfied with the following:⁷⁷

“The well-bucket taken away
By the morning-glory–
Alas, water to beg!”

Immediately thereafter, Noguchi turns to a criticism of another translation of the Moritake blossom and butterfly poem introduced above (50-51):

Take another example to show in which direction the English poetical mind pleases to turn:

I thought I saw the fallen leaves
Returning to their branches:
Alas, butterflies were they.

What real poetry is in the above, I wonder, except a pretty, certainly no high ordered, fancy of a vignettist; it might pass as a fitting specimen if we understand *Hokku* poems, as some Western students delight to understand *Hokku* poems, by the word “epigram” ... I may not be much mistaken to compare the word with a still almost dead pond where thought or fancy, nay the water, hardly changes or procreates itself; the real *Hokkus*, at least to my mind, are a running living water of poetry where you can reflect yourself to find your own identification. (Therefore the best *Hokku* poem is least translatable in English or perhaps in any language.)

There is a bit of reverse Orientalism here; for Noguchi, *hokku* are eternally Japanese and cannot be expropriated or colonized by the West. And yet he was a perceptive critic and apologist and by no means just a Japanese curiosity. Indeed, it was to Noguchi that Ezra Pound (1885-1972), now remembered for “make it new” and “break the pentameter,” owed part of his growing (though idiosyncratic) understanding of the cultures of the Far East. Pound was receptive to Noguchi’s ideas thanks to previous discussions about Japanese art and literature with colleagues such as the above-mentioned Laurence Binyon and F. S. Flint, and also T. E. Hulme.⁷⁸ Then in 1911 Noguchi sent Pound a collection of his poetry in English entitled *The Pilgrimage* (published in 1909), which Binyon had reviewed along with the work of Porter and Walsh the previous year in *The Times Literary Supplement*.⁷⁹ Pound wrote to his future wife, the painter Dorothy Shakespear (1886-1973), of the impact that Noguchi’s gift had had on him: “His poems seem to be rather beautiful. I don’t quite know what to think about them... . His matter is poetic & his stuff not like everything else, he is doubtless sent to save my artistic future. I was in doubt about his genius but I am now convinced.”⁸⁰

Pound’s new appreciation of Japanese poetry without question influenced his Vorticist aesthetics of precision of imagery, brevity, and free verse, which he described in an essay entitled “Vorticism” in 1914. Therein he quotes Moritake’s verse noted above:

The fallen blossom flies back to its branch:
A butterfly.

Pound then continues thus:

The “one image poem” is a form of super-position, that is to say, it is one idea set on top of another. I found it useful in getting out of the impasse in which I had been left by my metro emotion. I wrote a thirty-line poem, and destroyed it because it was what we call ‘of second intensity.’ Six months later I made a poem half that length; a year later I made the following *hokku*-like sentence:–

The apparition of these faces in the crowd:
 Petals, on a wet, black bough.

I dare say it is meaningless unless one has drifted into a certain vein of thought. In a poem of this sort one is trying to record the precise instant when a thing outward and objective transforms itself, or darts into a thing inward and subjective. (1914, 467)⁸¹

The two-line version presented by Pound is striking and compressed, though still rhythmical—a metaphor in a string of nouns with no verb. The uncredited three-line English version that Noguchi critiques, by contrast, remains the product of an earlier time. Pound's Metro couplet is not a haiku; Kenneth Yasuda remarks that it is "lacking in unity, in that forceful intensity of poetic vision and insight which alone can weld the objects named into a meaningful whole" (1957, xviii). But Pound and Noguchi are both working toward the notion of the poetic force of the thing in itself, shorn of explanation, standing and expressing on its own, both in English poetry and in literal translations from the Japanese. Their approach bears out F. S. Flint's percipient prophecy that "to the poet who can catch and render, like these Japanese, the brief fragments of his soul's music, the future lies open" (1908: 213). And it puts the lie to Binyon's view, surprising in one who found Japanese poetry so suggestive and sophisticated, that such verse was nevertheless unlikely "to set new currents flowing in our literature" (1910, 41).

Pound enunciated his Vorticist principles the month after Europe was plunged into the shattering vortex of the Great War, which destroyed a generation, including a host of young artists and writers.⁸² Comfortable, pastoral predictability was supplanted by disillusionment, cynicism, and a sense of randomness and fragmentation. Artists and intellectuals who had survived or lost loved ones were driven by the war to question previous assumptions about God, human nature, and social order, to abandon a discredited past, and to find new answers and express them with new means. "If any question why we died, / Tell them, because our fathers lied," wrote the erstwhile apostle of empire Rudyard Kipling after he lost his own beloved son to the cataclysm.

And yet British poetry and poetic criticism continued avidly to be written in the midst of this global horror. On July 1, 1916 the Battle of Somme began, and on that day alone the British army suffered nearly 60,000 casualties—the greatest one-day loss in its history. But two weeks later in the literary journal *The Dial*, Arthur L. Salmon published "The Spirit of Japanese Poetry," much of which is drawn from Noguchi's book with the same title. There, he too reproduces the versions of Chiyo's morning-glory poem by Arnold and Walsh, and concludes that Noguchi's condemnation of padded lines and rhyming stanzas is exactly right, judging Arnold's version "clumsy and unsatisfying." And while he gives more credit to Walsh than Noguchi did, judging her version to be "far better" than Arnold's, he still agrees with Noguchi in the end. Salmon writes, "[Walsh's] English has to express what the Japanese merely suggests. It takes thirty syllables to do what the original does in fifteen; and Yone Noguchi tells us that the literal translation is really far the most satisfactory" (1916, 45). But neither is he an uncritical apologist for Japanese verse, for while he admires its extreme delicacy and suggestivity, he concludes with a variation on the criticism of earlier detractors noted here earlier: "we feel that the full character of the people is not thus expressed,— only transient moods, fleeting emotions of desire or memory. It is not thus that a nation can adequately embody its ideals, its ambitions, and its thoughts" (45).

Another translator who came down strongly on the side of brevity and literalness was Arthur Waley, he of the Akashi Bay translation above with its numbered lines, who came of literary age at this time.⁸³ He brought to his Japanese and Chinese studies hard-headed philological method and dispassionate judgment, through which he rejected the uncritical Orientalist enthusiasms and lingering Victorian poetic attitudes of some of his countrymen. His guide to classical Japanese verse, *Japanese Poetry: The Uta*, dates from 1919. Over the course of his lifetime, though, his interest in that genre was eclipsed by his attraction to the Japanese prose classics, most notably *The Tale of Genji*, and to the Chinese poetic tradition. Indeed his *Japanese Poetry: The Uta* was criticized by reviewers for its lack of enthusiasm toward its subject, shown, for example, by these remarks on *Hyakunin isshu*:

This collection is so selected as to display the least pleasing features of Japanese poetry. Artificialities of every kind abound, and the choice does little credit to the taste of Sada-iye [Teika] to whom the compilation is attributed. These poems have gained an unmerited circulation in Japan, owing to the fact that they are used in a kind of "Happy Families" card-game. (1919, 11)

One might ask, however, whether the fact that the *Hyakunin isshu* poems had come to be used in a New Year's card game actually stemmed from the esteem in which they were held in the premodern era. The coolness that alienated some reviewers perhaps resulted from Waley's conviction, echoing Noguchi's, that Japanese poetry could not be translated at all: "The translations in this book are chiefly intended to facilitate the study of the Japanese text; for Japanese poetry can only be rightly enjoyed in the original" (12). A brilliant translator, Waley professed not to be awed by the linguistic complexities of his task, famously opining that since "the classical language has an easy grammar and limited vocabulary, a few months should suffice for the mastering of it" (12). He does, however, provide outside help to the student in the form of a list of the main anthologies of translations of Japanese poetry into English, French, and German. His examples in *Japanese Poetry: The Uta* were therefore meant in part as material for the grammatical study of the poems, and by extension of the Japanese classical language, thus accounting in part for their literalness.⁸⁴ But his unembellished accuracy was also a conscious aesthetic choice, and he dismissed the work of his predecessors Chamberlain and Aston for their "very free versions from the Manyō and Kokin" (20). It was precisely that literalness that recommended his translations to the critic Babette Deutsch (1895-1982), who praised Waley's unornamented approach: "Japanese poetry is utterly distinct from the sick languors of the eighteen-nineties. It is crisp and terse, rich and brief. *Weltschmerz* is heavier when it goes half-uttered. Beauty, like music and fragrance, is sharpest when it is passing" (1921, 207).⁸⁵

As seen in the example earlier, Waley provides *en face* romanized versions of the original Japanese and visually represents both in five units on the same page, with the Japanese on the left and the English on the right, as Florenz had done in German. Waley's reason for adopting this format was to help students apprehend the verses in the original, and his left-right numbering system of the corresponding Japanese measures and English lines is a useful aid, if aesthetically deflating. Placing the Japanese on the left and the English on the right, rather than above and below, also establishes a parity between the two languages, and it reminds the reader at all times of the fact of

translation. Certainly romanization was a concern of earlier translators such as Dickins, MacCauley, and Porter, but they did not provide English and romanized Japanese side by side in corresponding five-part groups.

The format of romanization on the left, combined with a five-line translation without fixed meter, rhyme, or ornament, was soon thereafter adopted by Dan Frank Waugh and Frank Prentice Rand in their *Crumpled Leaves from Old Japan*, save that the Japanese and the English are on facing pages.⁸⁶

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Tago no ura yu | Out on the bay, |
| Uchi-idete mireba | Sailing from Tago, |
| Ma-shiro ni zo | I can still see the snow, |
| Fuji no takane ni | The white, falling snow, |
| Yuki wa furikeru | On the Mountain of Fuji. |

Waugh and Rand retain Waley's literal simplicity of diction and prosody. They are also the first translators we have seen to apply the later interpretation of a speaker aboard ship. But more critically, their speaker says he can *still* see the snow, whereas the point is that he is only now struck for the first time by the snowy vista. And they use the word "snow" twice, introducing a repetition not in the original. In short, they borrow Waley's approach, but not his care.

Thus the insistence on literal and accurate translation that characterized the work of Noguchi and Waley did not carry all before it, either in the West or in Japan itself. T. Wakameda (Wakameda Takeji 若目田武次), for example, was another Japanese with the courage to translate out of his native tongue in a genre where the essence is famously lost in translation. It is from him that we have the first complete English translation of *Kokinshū*, which appeared in London in 1922. Here is his version of the Akashi poem (99):

Day dimly dawns on Akashi:
Amidst the morning haze a boat
Sails on behind the isle so free:
I stand ashore and send my thought.

The diction is neutral, and the alliteration of the first line nicely recalls the reduplicated assonance of *honobono to* in the original. But the rendition is otherwise of another age, with four lines of eight syllables and no indication of short or long measures (though again, the metrical regularity itself does reflect that of the original verse). The translator employs an A-B-A-B rhyme scheme, with "so free" having evidently been added to rhyme with Akashi and fill out the syllable count. This is particularly unfortunate, as it skews the meaning of the verse as a whole; whereas in the original the speaker, as we have seen, views the boat disappearing into the mist as an "intimation of mortality," here the speaker seems to envy the freedom of the sea-bound travelers. Throughout his anthology, Wakameda is formally innovative, employing from two to eight lines and varied line lengths and rhyme schemes. But without romanization, the reader may miss the formal strictures of the waka medium.

Wakameda was perpetuating an earlier English poetic style just when other translators, like Noguchi and Waley, were challenging that model. The latter made his preferences clear in a review in *The Times Literary Supplement* of Wakameda's work (1922, 439):

In [Wakameda's] version of another famous poem ... he seems to have missed the point:–

O cuckoo, I feel cold to thee,
For there is many a place where thou
Cuckoo'st; yet thou dost not know how
Dearly I have yearned after thee.

It is a love-poem, addressed to a girl who had many lovers–

When I remember, O cuckoo, how many are the villages where you sing, I am estranged from you even in the moment of love.

In the end, Waley damns the author with very faint praise: “These translations, if they do stimulate interest, are not sufficiently accurate to serve as a ‘crib’ for serious students of the language. Perhaps, however, the translator’s very helplessness adds a fragrance of its own.” As opposed to the rhyme in Wakameda’s version, Waley limits himself to a prose paraphrase, in view of his contention in the same review that “unfortunately, translators of the ‘Kokinshū’ seem almost without exception to hold the common view that prose can be turned into poetry by equipping it with rhymes and antiquated vocabulary.” And yet he lives in a glass house, for his paraphrase, like Wakameda’s, spells out the metaphor where as the original does not, and what is more, his explanation is incorrect. The conventions of Japanese courtly love poetry, the product of a society in which many aristocratic males were polygamous, dictate that the speaker here can only be a woman bemoaning the fact that the man (the metaphorical cuckoo) who is with her at the moment and making conventional protestations of constancy, in fact has women in other nests as well. Here is a more modern translation of the poem, *Kokinshū* 14: 710 (anonymous):

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| ta ga sato ni | Whose village |
| yogare o shite ka | have you forsaken this night, |
| hototogisu | cuckoo, |
| tada koko ni shi mo | to insist to me in song |
| netaru koe suru | that it is only here you sleep? |

Given the conventions of courtly poetic love, the man’s interest is already cooling; he will soon stop visiting the author of this *complainte* altogether, leaving her to wait for him night after night in lonely resentment.

Waley’s work proved particularly provocative to Curtis Hidden Page (1870-1946), a professor of French at Harvard who had spent time in Japan. For his *Japanese Poetry: An Historical Essay with Two Hundred and Thirty Translations* (1923) he studied the work of most of the early translators introduced above, and French and German translators as well, but reserved special praise for Waley, “who combines thorough scholarship and careful exactness, with that all too rare literary sense which appreciates the quality and the paramount importance in Japanese literature of *tanka* and *hokku*” (vii). Page had given careful consideration to the translator’s task:

In my verse translations from the French and the Italian, I have made bold to claim absolute faithfulness, not only to the spirit and the quality of the original, but even to the minute details of meaning and turn of phrase; while hoping at the same time to make the translation read as if it were a poem freshly and originally created in English. (ix)

This is an ideal encapsulation of the strain of translation theory that takes transparency as its goal. But he found that the challenge of Japanese was of a different order of magnitude:

No such claim of exact fidelity in phrasing can be made for these translations from the Japanese. [They] could not be literally exact, and still mean anything, as poems or even as prose, to the reader . . . Still I hope that [the book] is, throughout, a true book; first, that it is, as it is first of all meant to be, a true book in Charles Lamb's sense of the word; and also that even my Japanese friends will in their courtesy find it true usually to the letter and always to the spirit, of Japanese poetry. (v)

It comes as a surprise, then, to examine his work and compare his versions to the terse and austere quality of Waley's. Here is his Tago Bay attempt (31):

To Tago in Suruga I will go,
 There by the shore to see, on Fuji's height,
 The freshly fallen snow
 Whiter than utmost white.

He is quite right to say that in this case "no such claim to exact fidelity in phrasing" can be made, or exact fidelity in any other aspect of the poem either, which seems to channel Yeats at Innisfree. In content, the verse adds "in Suruga" to explain where Tago Bay is, though for readers unfamiliar with premodern Japanese geography the addition of Suruga surely will not help. Perhaps it was added for euphony, or for a second exotic place name. Second, the poet here has yet to set out; he is planning to see Fuji and its snow, whereas in the Japanese original he is already struck by its whiteness. The rhyme scheme of A-B-A-B is challenging, but it has forced the translator to place "whiter than utmost white" at the end rather than in the middle. And "whiter than utmost white," substitutes wordy explanation for pithy description. It is hard to see how Waley could have been anything but disappointed by this attempt.

Page does, however, provide a personal justification against carrying the current trend toward literalness too far:

Take first the literal rendering of one of the simpler [hokku], a poem that is familiar to all Japanese:

First-snow as-to
 That also man-of child
 Barrel-pick-up.

Here is the translation:

Through the winter's first of many bitter snows
 See where the shivering rag-picker goes—
 He, too, a son of man.

There are ten words in the original; in the translation nineteen; three or four of them might be omitted, but they help to give a flavor really present in the original; and while "rag-picker" is not quite literal, it gives in English an equivalent impression. That is about as near as one often ought to come, to imitating the condensation of these Japanese masterpieces. Anything like such extreme use of condensation and ellipsis, in English, would most often be artificial and unnatural—and therefore false to the original, in which it rarely is so; thus it would wholly misrepresent the Japanese poem, even when it did not result in producing a

mere enigma. In such cases, as has been well said, “a closely literal translation may fail to translate, and faith unfaithful make one truly false.” (1923, 97-98)⁸⁷

But, of course, what is “artificial and unnatural” is subjective.

The word “flavor” was put to opposite use by the Dutch scholar Jan Lodewijk Pierson (1893-1979), who set out in 1929 to translate the entire *Man'yōshū* into English. In his preface, he writes that as a non-native speaker, he could not hope to imitate Dickins’s “beautiful English,” and so he prefers “to translate literally which however has some advantages. In the first place anybody who is slightly versed in ancient Japanese can easily follow the original text, and in the second place the real ‘flavour’ of the language is far better preserved in a literal translation.”⁸⁸ Tackling this collection of more than 4,500 poems written in the complex and obsolete Man’yō orthography is a daunting task today; how much more so it was nearly a century ago, particularly for someone who had neither English nor Japanese as his native language.⁸⁹ It is no wonder that it took him 35 years to finish. His version of the Tago Bay poem, reproduced in its original orthography and his idiosyncratic romanization, reads like this (vol. 3, 115):

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (1) Tako no ura yu 田兒之浦從 | (2) Uti-dete mireba 打出而見者 |
| (3) Ma-siroku zo 眞白衣 | (4) Vuzi no takane ni 不盡能高嶺爾 |
| | (5) Yuki va vurikeru 雪者零家留 |

Translation.

- (1/2) When I came out from Tako’s gulf and looked up,
 (3) Oh, how beautifully white (5) the snow has come to fall
 (4) on Fuzi’s lofty peak!

Like Waley (whose “clever” translations he also consulted), Pierson numbers his lines to establish a one-to-one correspondence between his English and the five measures of the original, for the benefit of the students and scholars that he clearly expects will be his main audience. In the romanization of this verse, he follows Kamochi Masazumi’s reading of 眞白衣 as *ma-siroku zo* (*mashiroku so*) in preference to the more common *mashiro ni zo* (or *so*), which Kamochi believes is too late for the date of the verse in question.⁹⁰ Pierson also reads *uchiidete* as *uchidete* (as it would have been chanted), and he prefers the unvocalized Tako instead of Tago. For every verse he provides a translation, general remarks, grammar notes, and a review of different readings. While it is doubtful that his work had a wide readership beyond the academic community, it had particular value at the time for its thorough philology; he is the first of the translators introduced here to provide the original Man’yō orthography of the poems in that anthology. For anyone who took the trouble to consult it, it served as a reminder of how much complex linguistic and textual analysis underscored the English translations that stood alone on the pages of more popular editions.

By the end of the 1920’s, then, translators of Japanese classical poetry had a number of models at their disposal, from the very free and ornamented to the literal and bare-boned, together with perhaps a somewhat more balanced notion of the virtues of the literatures of both cultures. If there were translators like Page writing in an earlier vein, there were others who were rendering the original poems ever more literally. So far had the wheel turned in the six decades since Dickins that Virginia Woolf in 1925 could now draw an unflattering

comparison between the elegance and refinement of ancient Japanese courtiers of the time of *The Tale of Genji* and their contemporaries in Olde England who could do nothing but “burst rudely and hoarsely into crude spasms of song.”⁹¹ And J. Ingram Bryan, far from attempting to naturalize his translations with rhyme, now actually apologizes for where it may accidentally occur: “Most of the poetry I have ventured to do in the original *tanka* metre; and I apologize if here and there I have fallen into rhyme which is so often instinctive to the English ear” (1929, 8).⁹²

Japanese translators were also aware of the growing foreign interest in traditional Japanese poetry and, in reverse, of the increasing numbers of Japanese interested in using translations of their national poetry as a route to acquiring literary English. Particularly notable in this respect was Miyamori Asatarō 宮森麻太郎 (1869-1952), who taught English language and literature at, among other institutions, his alma mater Keiō University. An early foray of his into the realm of English translation of Japanese poetry was *An Anthology of Haiku Ancient and Modern* of 1932. He writes in the preface to the work that he intended it “primarily for Western readers who have no knowledge of Japanese literature.” But he also had in mind “those foreign readers who have some knowledge of Japanese literature and also for Japanese students of English” (1932, i).⁹³ Miyamori underscores the scholarly purpose and international perspective of his work by selectively citing alternate renditions by most of the Western translators noted here earlier, including Chamberlain, Aston, Hearn, Page, and Porter, Japanese counterparts such as Yone Noguchi, Nitobe Inazō, Saitō Hidesaburō 齋藤秀三郎 (1866-1929), and Toyoda Minoru 豊田実 (1884-1972), and Michel Revon in French.⁹⁴



Miyamori Asatarō

Source: blogimg.goo.ne.jp/user_image/69/19/d4d47bf23bf43e50ebddca0a54489942.jpg

His pedagogical purpose is also reflected in the format he chose for representing haiku. He first provides modern Japanese orthography, in one horizontal line but subdivided by spaces into three measures, and below it a romanized version, likewise in a single line but subdivided into three parts. Haiku in Japanese were not conventionally subdivided into three lines, and Miyamori's layout makes for easier parsing of the originals. Then at the bottom is the English translation in two bold-type lines that are rhymed where possible and have varied numbers of syllables. Here is his unrhymed English rendition of Chiyo's poem on the morning glories (I omit the Japanese and the romanization) (1932, 425):

A morning-glory having taken
The well-bucket, I begged for water.

He thereafter notes versions by Page, Chamberlain, Walsh, Noguchi, and Revon, and his is the most literal of the lot, followed closely by that of Noguchi, quoted here earlier.

Miyamori followed this work four years later with a companion anthology of waka, *Masterpieces of Japanese Poetry Ancient and Modern*, wherein he repeats his hope that some readers foreign and domestic will use the book not only for poetic appreciation but for language training.⁹⁵ This was apparently not an idle aim, as suggested by this note beneath his version of the Tago Bay poem (see below): "*Shirotae* is a pillow-word associated with *yuki* or 'snow', so that the latter half of the altered verse means: *Shirotae no yuki wa Fuji no takane ni furitsutsu*" (1936, 70).⁹⁶ The explanation is opaque to anyone who cannot already understand the romanized Japanese. Though Arthur Waley was using poetry as a medium for instruction nearly two decades earlier, Miyamori's remarks reflect a new Japanese sense of equality of purpose between the students of language and literature in both cultures. He is confident that some foreign readers have begun applying themselves to learning Japanese language and literature in the same way that Japanese like himself had been devoting themselves for decades to studying those of Western nations.

He adopts the same format to represent waka, *mutatis mutandis*, that he did for haiku, first providing modern Japanese orthography in two horizontal lines and then below them two horizontal lines of romanization, both subdivided by spaces into their constituent five measures to make the divisions clear, followed by an English translation in bold type at the bottom. In these waka translations he is anything but innovative, using "poetic" English vocabulary in verses arranged in quatrain form with A-B-C-B rhyme and iambic rhythm tending toward tetrameter and trimeter. The quatrain form obfuscates the original five-part poetic structure that Miyamori takes pains to elucidate in the Japanese and romanization above it. Here is his version of the Tago Bay verse (1936, 69):

富士山
田子の浦ゆ うち出でて見れば 眞白にぞ
不盡の高嶺に 雪は降りける

Fuji-no-Yama

Tago-no-ura yu Uchi-idete mireba Mashiro ni zo
Fuji no takane ni Yuki wa furikeru.

Mount Fuji

**I have strolled forth
To Tago-no-ura and lo!
Mount Fuji's lofty peak is purest white
With newly fallen snow.**

He thus adheres to an earlier English mode while Western translators are becoming more Japanese. Doubtless he does so because he conceived of it as a time-honored, prestige English poetic dialect appropriate for the similarly venerable language of formal waka. His haiku are somewhat more neutral in diction, reflecting the fact that the genre often features more colloquial diction and more quotidian vocabulary and topics, though often with its own underlying seriousness of purpose.

Miyamori is also scholar enough to translate not only the *Man'yōshū* version of the Tago Bay poem but also the *Shinkokinshū/Hyakuin isshu* alternate (I again omit the Japanese and the romanization):

I have strolled forth
To Tago-no-ura and lo!
Upon Mount Fuji's lofty peak
Is falling pure white snow.

In his notes he conveys his belief that in the *Man'yōshū* version *yu* means not "from" but "to," and *ura*, not "bay" but "seashore," which makes it in his view the same as his *Shinkokinshū/Hyakunin isshu* verse, save for the snow falling rather than having fallen. And though he takes the trouble of retaining in the romanization and the note the epithet *shirotae* (white mulberry cloth), he omits it in the translation itself. In addition, in his introduction he also provides the original *Man'yō* orthography for this poem and contrasts it with the modern Japanese version (1936, 18-19). Unlike Pierson, however, he does not provide such orthography for the other *Man'yōshū* poems in his anthology.

Two years later, in 1938, Miyamori produced a revised and abridged version of the work, which he entitled *An Anthology of Japanese Poems*. For this new version he took the opportunity to English his Tago Bay verse slightly further, changing "Tago-no-ura" to "Tago's shore." But he continues to cleave to his "poetic" English form and diction. After all, reviews of the original volume had given him no cause for change; the poet and nominee for the Nobel Prize in Literature Edmund Blunden (1896-1974), for example, opined in the *Times Literary Supplement* that the two volumes of Miyamori's *Masterpieces of Japanese Poetry Ancient and Modern* are among the "most elaborate and attractive collections of the kind ever offered to the Western reader" (Blunden 1936).⁹⁷

Miyamori was obviously committed to the quatrain form for his waka translation and to the couplet for haiku, which are half a waka in length. It is interesting, therefore, to note that in his revised and abridged haiku anthology, *Haiku Poems Ancient and Modern* (1940) he changed to a more formally literal approach, with three lines of varied numbers of syllables but progressively indented and, where possible, rhymed A-B-A. Here is his revised and unrhymed version of Chiyo's verse (225):

A morning-glory
Having taken the well-bucket,
I begged [my neighbor] for water.

The bracketed addition perhaps reflects a strengthening of the translator's pedagogical motive, but it seems to detract from the artistic effect. He gives no rationale in his explanatory matter for the change, but certainly the three lines better correspond to the three parts of the original.

But the cross-cultural convergence that Miyamori fostered was being simultaneously eroded by the country's increasing aggression toward its East Asian neighbors, particularly after its army invaded Manchuria in 1931 and established a puppet state there the following year. Conflict intensified thereafter and descended into the Second Sino-Japanese War after Japan engineered the Marco Polo Bridge incident in 1937. In the rising nationalistic atmosphere on the Japanese home front, poetry was turned to the purpose of propaganda, and the *Man'yōshū* anthology was celebrated in particular as the repository of a Japanese spirit that antedated the pernicious influence of Chinese letters.

It was thus *Man'yōshū* from which Okada Tetsuzō 岡田哲蔵 (1869-1945) chose three hundred poems to translate into English in 1938. In his short introduction, he manifests a sense of national pride and international competitiveness: "In English poetry, Tottel's Miscellany appeared in 1557 A.D. and Percy's Reliques in 1765 A.D. Compared with these, our Manyoshu, the oldest collection of Japanese poems, though much junior to the Greek, is far senior to the English. The last poem in this collection is dated 759 A.D., which is 641 years before the death of Chaucer" (1938, i). China, with a literary tradition going back three millennia, is not surprisingly missing from his list, given the current strife on the continent. Perhaps for the same reason he neglects *Kaifūsō* 懷風藻 (Florilegium of cherished airs, 751), an extant Japanese anthology that appeared before the final version of *Man'yōshū* but which inconveniently contains verses by Japanese poets writing not in Japanese but in Chinese, then the common literary language of East Asia.

Here is Okada's rendition of the Tago Bay verse (20-21):

318. Mount Fuji Yamabé no Akahito

To Tago's seashore now
I come out and look up
At Fuji's heaven-high peak
All white with fallen snow.

In his collection, Okada renders waka in three, four, or five lines, and rhyme is always present, though in various schemes. This evidently accounts for the "now" in line one of the verse above, which has no counterpart in the original. The diction of this verse is quite modern, but throughout the collection as a whole he clings to older locutions ("when wilt thou come," "goest thou," etc.) as well as to the perceived need for a title for each verse. "Heaven-high" is his own addition as well, which adds a sacral quality that in view of the preceding *chōka* (see below) is not misplaced but not literal. Romanization is not provided; instead anachronistic transliterations in modern Japanese orthography are added as an appendix. In many of the translations the English is unnatural; this renders them less transparent and reminds the Anglophone reader that they are, after all, translations. But this is probably not the effect that Okada intended.

Like Miyamori and Okada, the Japanese government recognized the global reach of the English language, and it therefore established a committee of scholars to translate into English a thousand poems from *Manyōshū*, a quarter of the anthology. The result, *The Manyōshū* (1940), is unapologetic in its aims and begins with this statement of purpose:

The importance of rendering Japanese classics into foreign languages as a means of acquainting the world with the cultural and spiritual background of Japan cannot be over-emphasized. Few Japanese, however, have ventured into this field, the work so far having been largely undertaken by foreigners. It is in view of this regrettable fact that the Japanese Classics Translations Committee was appointed in 1934 ...⁹⁸

Despite the condescension displayed in the preface toward foreign translators, however, the thousand poems were in fact polished by the English poet Ralph Hodgson (1871-1962). The translations are careful, as would be expected given the scholarly composition of the committee, and stylistically they have abandoned the rhyme, fixed meter, and antique poetic vocabulary of some of their predecessors. But the translators espouse a conservative notion of what aspects of Japanese poetry can or cannot be conveyed in English, ignoring many of the ancient *makurakotoba* epithets that are thought to have originally been invoked to channel the word-magic of the names with which they are customarily connected (although the translators do retain the epithet “sky-traversing” in the *chōka* below). To be sure, such epithets are difficult to translate, as some are so ancient that their meanings are obscure, and they can momentarily deflect attention from the main thrust of the verse. Shorn of those epithets the translations are easier to read, but they lose some of the mythic grandeur of the originals. The Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai’s translation of the long poem to which our Tago Bay envoy is appended reads thus:⁹⁹

Ever since heaven and earth were parted,
It has towered lofty, noble, divine,
Mount Fuji in Suruga!

When we look up to the plains of heaven,
The light of the sky-traversing sun is shaded,
The gleam of the shining moon is not seen,
White clouds dare not cross it,
And for ever it snows.

We shall tell of it from mouth to mouth,
O the lofty mountain of Fuji!

Envoy

When going forth I look far from the shore of Tago,
How white and glittering is
The lofty Peak of Fuji,
Crowned with snows!

The work may be taken today to be a landscape verse, a paean to a grand and beautiful view. But to read it only as such would be anachronistic, for the original also functioned as apotropaic praise of the mountain’s divinity. Here indeed the mountain is so lofty and noble that the personified clouds themselves dare not transgress (the question of personification itself is fraught in view of ancient Japanese animism). The Romantic notion of the sublime comes closer, the sense of awe and even terror that nature may instill. The remark in the *chōka* that “for ever it snows” is the link to the envoy coda. The Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai version construes Akahito as speaking on behalf of his listeners, as Hitomaro did in his

official bardic capacity. Moreover it chooses not to reflect the long and short measures of the original, sometimes combining one long and one short into a single translated line, and it divides the work into separate stanzas. Thus the envoy at the end combines the first two measures of the original, again exploiting the quatrain form. Compare the *chōka* to this more literal attempt:¹⁰⁰

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>ame tsuchi no wakareshi toki yu kamusabite takaku tōtoki suruga naru fuji no takane o ama no hara furisake mireba wataru hi no kage mo kakurai teru tsuki no hikari mo miezu shirakumo mo iyuki habakari tokijiku so yuki wa furikeru kataritsugi iitsugiyukamu fuji no takane wa</p> | <p>From the distant past before heaven and earth were parted, the lofty peak of Fuji in the land of Suruga has stood divine, exalted, and majestic, and gazing up into the field of heaven, I see that the light of the sun that courses the sky is hidden, and the brilliance of the shining moon has vanished. White clouds dare not pass the peak, and in every season there is snow fallen upon it. I will go on telling of it and describing it to others: the lofty peak of Fuji!</p> |
|--|---|

The Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai version retains the parallelism and as much of the meaning as it deems possible, but in abridged and subdivided form, giving the translation a quicker pace that is at once more congenial to modern readers and less accurate. As observed at the outset here, one problem is that the Japanese language need not specify the number of the first-person pronoun, which I render above in the singular but which the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai takes as plural, though it reverts to the singular in the Tago Bay envoy. The plural emphasizes the collective nature of much Man'yō-era song, but the singular is in keeping with the subjective lyricism of the affective-expressive stance and also the developing sense of the individual poet as the 8th century progressed. The use of “one” might sometimes serve as a compromise in English. The Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai version also eschews nearly all commentary, but it includes an appendix with romanizations of all the poems therein. That appendix was omitted, though, in the abridged version of 1965.

Poetry was more overtly turned to the purposes of propaganda by a collection of patriotic verses modeled on the concept of a hundred-poem anthology, entitled *Aikoku hyakunin isshu* 愛国百人一首.¹⁰¹ It was published with poem cards so that it might be enjoyed as game in the fashion of the original *Hyakunin isshu*. The collection was translated into English in 1944 by Honda Heihachirō 本田平八郎 (H. H. Honda, 1893-1973) as *One Hundred Patriotic Poems*. Here is one example (no. 38), by Nakatomi (no) Sukeharu 中臣祐春 (1245–1324):

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 神 | | 西 |
| | の | | の |
| | 守 | よ | 海 |
| | れ | せ | |
| や | る | く | |
| ま | | る | 中 |
| と | | 波 | 臣 |
| 島 | 心 | も | 祐 |
| 根 | せ | | 春 |
| ぞ | よ | | |

Nishi no umi
Yosekuru nami mo
Kokoro seyo
Kami no mamoreru
Yamato shimane zo

–Nakatomi Sukeharu

* * *

Be careful, O Wave
 That comes from the Western Sea!
 Because the Gods save
 Our Yamato Isles, and see
 Harm'll come from no enemy.

The original poem was occasioned by the Mongol Invasions of 1274 and 1281, which in both cases were repelled by typhoons, the celebrated “divine winds” (*kamikaze*) thought to have been sent by the Japanese gods. But “Western Sea” here also conveniently applies to Japan’s enemies in the Second World War.¹⁰²

Honda translates in A-B-A-B-B rhyme that matches the 5-7-5-7-7 syllabic structure, with the long lines indented. He writes that he was inspired to pursue this format by this syllabic translation (in A-B-A-C-C rhyme) by Nitobe Inazō of a poem by the scholar of National Learning Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730-1801):¹⁰³

“Isles of blest Japan!
 Should your Yamato spirit
 Strangers seek to scan
 Say-scenting morn’s sunlit air,
 Blows the cherry wild and fair!”

Honda’s format is a *tour de force* of inventiveness, but in the Nakatomi Sukeharu verse above it necessitates a last line (with the unfortunate “harm’ll”) that is entirely an invention of the translator.

In terms of overall page layout, Honda also seems to have been influenced by Miyamori, whose work was just introduced above, for he likewise provides Japanese and romanized versions that are both divided by spaces into five parts. But he now goes further still, departing from the quatrain and representing not only the English translation but also the romanization and even the original Japanese in five lines. His diction, though, is also of an older stamp, and his five-line format would later likewise revert to the quatrain model.

Honda, Okada, and the translators of the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai were all writing after the outbreak of war in China and subsequently in the Pacific. One motive for some of their English versions was surely imperialistic—a means of “acquainting the world with the cultural and spiritual background of Japan,” as the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai put it above. Such translations may also have had a symbolic purpose, to subvert the Anglo-American hegemony over the English language itself and turn it to the uses of Japan’s own Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (Daitōa kyōeiken 大東亜共栄圏). Perhaps their works, like Miyamori’s, were also another example of using poetry for language training, a necessary enterprise in view of the Japanese imperial imaginary. And surely they boosted the morale of the Japanese who could read them. But it may be as well that some translators were taking advantage of one of the only politically unassailable opportunities left them to practice their art, now that the Anglophone world was ranged against their homeland and government censors were vigilant. In any case it is ironic that the painfully learned craft of English poetic translation was now being turned against the lands of its origin.

The proliferation of translations by Japanese during the war years also spurred Taketomo Torao 竹友厩雄 (1891-1954) to give thought to the ideal format for rendering waka into English. Taketomo was well placed for this endeavor, having studied at Yale and Columbia before becoming a professor of English literature at Kwansei Gakuin University. He was also a poet in his own right, with the pen name Sōfū 藻風. He published his conclusions in 1942 as *The “Tanka” in English Translation, with Fifty Poems from the “Manyōshū.”* Therein, he has little good to say about the waka translations made either by his Japanese predecessors Okada, Miyamori, and the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai translators, or by their counterparts in Great Britain and the United States, Chamberlain, Porter, and MacCauley. He credits his Japanese colleagues with having a clearer sense of the underlying feeling of waka poetry, but he faults their English, writing that “no one, I suppose, who takes delight in reading English poetry will find anything exciting in them” (Taketomo 1942, 9). He judges Prof. Okada’s renditions to be “trite and tedious” and the “free verse” of the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkokai translators to “read like reports.” He is even harder on the Anglophones. For example, the couplet that Aston found so “neatly rendered” by Chamberlain as “O love! who gave thee thy superfluous name?—/Loving and dying—is it not the same?” is instead judged by Taketomo to be “more like a fragment from an English poet of the eighteenth century than a translation from Japanese poetry” (5). And Porter and MacCauley have, in his opinion, mistaken form for content: “They thought if the form of syllabic phrases were transplanted from one language into another, poetry would necessarily be carried with it” (6). It is curious, though, that Taketomo examines in detail the work of only three Anglophone translators, the most recent of whom was writing more than thirty years previously.

He then elegantly expresses his own solution, based on his appreciation of the quatrains of certain English poets and translators from ancient Greek:

“as the lyre trembles and sounds after the wind had died away, will come out a verse which is entirely acclimatized in English poetry, and yet gives the same kind of impression to his reader, as he has experienced while he was reading the original. . . . If the quatrain of iambic tetrametre with alternate rhyme were thus produced, and if it can achieve the translation thus described, then it would be a proper form of English verse for the *tanka*.” (17)

Taketomo subsequently puts his theory into practice, providing translations of fifty verses from *Man'yōshū*. Here is his Tago Bay attempt:¹⁰⁴

I came out to the Tago shore
 And saw Mount Fuji's noble height
 With fallen snow enwreathèd o'er,
 Soaring high in whiteness bright.

Just when Modernists in Great Britain and the United States were rethinking poetry in English and “breaking the pentameter,” thanks in part to the Japanese model, Taketomo is reverting to an earlier English style.

He does mention the names of early exponents of the five-line translation form—Aston, Florenz, Revon, and Waley (Honda would not publish until two years later)—but he looks no further at their work, since he is arguing in favor of a different format. He does, however, admit that their labors were not entirely in vain: “If that newly invented form of American poetry, the ‘cinquain’ in which the unfortunate Adelaide Crapsey excelled, were suggested, as I think, by these translations, it was perhaps the best thing that came out of the labours of almost half a century” (49-50).¹⁰⁵ Crapsey’s cinquains are structured in five lines of 2, 4, 6, 8, and 2 syllables, such as this (Crapsey 1922, 43):

Arbutus
 Not Spring's
 Thou art, but hers,
 Most cool, most virginal,
 Winter's, with thy faint breath, thy snows
 Rose-tinged.

Another of Crapsey’s admirers was Carl Sandburg. Her work is worth quoting in passing not only as another case of likely Japanese influence on English poetry, but also as an example of a transitional blend of new poetic form and 19th-century literary diction.

The Second World War (or the Pacific War, as the Japanese call it) radically curtailed appreciation of the arts of Japan among her enemies, save some with an earlier knowledge of the country and its culture. But it multiplied the number of foreign speakers of the language, who learned it in military programs for national defense. Graduates of such programs would go on to contribute to the development of Japanese studies, not only through their teaching but also by greatly increasing the number of accurate and readable translations and sophisticated studies of Japanese literary works and genres.

In the aftermath of that brutal conflict, scholars and translators of Japanese literature once again took up the role of apologists for a culture not obscure but now discredited. The Japanese understandably took the lead in trying to rehabilitate their national image, and only three years after the end of the war the appropriately named Society for International Cultural Relations (Kokusai Bunka Shinkōkai) produced its *Introduction to Classic Japanese Literature* (Hisamatsu et al. 1948). Again, like many of the early histories and anthologies, it provides no romanization for the few examples of poetry within its narrative, which was written and translated by some of Japan’s most prestigious scholars and polished by Wilfrid Whitehouse and Ernest Pickering. (Miyamori Asatarō’s *Masterpieces of Japanese Poetry Ancient and Modern* from before the war was also republished in 1956 [Taiseidō Shobō].)

Western Anglophone translators followed suit. One of the earliest was the above-mentioned Ken (Kenneth) Yasuda (1914-2002), who in the same year, 1948, published his English version of *Hyakunin isshu*, entitled *Poem Card (The Hyakunin-isshu in English)*. Born in California, Yasuda earned his doctorate at the University of Tokyo for a study of haiku and went on to teach at the University of Indiana.¹⁰⁶ His version of the Tago Bay poem is very much modeled on earlier naturalized approaches (2):

Wandering I go
 forth on Tago Shore and how
 glitteringly white
 To my sight is fallen snow
 on Mt. Fuji's lofty height.

Here, Yasuda uses an interesting rhyme scheme of A-B-C-A-C ("how" also has a visual rhyme here with "snow," but that is exceptional, as is the internal rhyme with "white" and "sight") and, like Honda, he keeps the short lines one and four flush left, thus implying the division between an upper stanza of 5-7-5 and a lower one of 7-7. His rhyme scheme varies throughout his translations of the hundred verses, but rhyme is always present. He also adds the modern Japanese above the English, in two lines but separated into five measures with spaces. This is replicated below the poem by a two-line romanized version that matches the two lines of the Japanese, save that it is not subdivided into five parts. And he preserves the location of "glittering white" in the middle of the poem and gives it the same declarative emphasis. But Yasuda's division of the English lines seems arbitrarily determined by his desire to maintain the syllabic 5-7-5-7-7 structure of the original, rather than to reflect the natural divisions of the English. In terms of meaning, he adds the notion of a speaker who is not traveling but wandering, which is a very different state of mind. And his dedication to syllabification and rhyme sometimes leads to unnatural diction, as in this translation (17) of a verse by Ki no Tomonori 紀友則 (845?-907) (*Hyakunin isshu* no. 33, also *Kokinshū* 2: 84):

In the balmy hour
 of the sunlit day in spring
 how is it that flower
 Scatters from the cherry-tree
 as if most unquietly?

Yasuda's approach was quite different from that of Donald Keene (1922-), who worked as a translator during the war and then took an academic position at Columbia University. Keene included many of his own translations in his *Anthology of Japanese Literature* of 1955, which he dedicated to Arthur Waley.¹⁰⁷ He went on to become the doyen of Japanese letters in the West, producing a huge oeuvre of authoritative studies and translations. The chapter on *Man'yōshū* in that anthology reproduces the translations made by the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai and Ralph Hodgson a decade and a half earlier. His own translations elsewhere in the volume match the literalness and spareness of the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai versions and those of Waley; they eschew syllabic meter and rhyme while retaining the five-part structure and insofar as possible the alternation of long and short measures; indeed in some cases Keene is able to retain the same syllable count (see below). And like Waley, he provides the romanized

Japanese on the left to provide for comparison. Keene adds this line of commentary for his rendition of the verse translated by Yasuda just above: “Note how the use of words beginning in *h* intensifies the meaning of the poem,” which shows one way in which he hopes the romanizations will be used.¹⁰⁸ His version of Ki no Tomonori’s verse reads thus (80):



Donald Keene

Source: http://www.keenecenter.org/Donald_Keene.html

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Hisakata no | This perfectly still |
| Hikari nodokeki | Spring day bathed in the soft light |
| Haru no hi ni | From the spread-out sky, |
| Shizu kokoro naku | Why do the cherry blossoms |
| Hana no chiruramu | So restlessly scatter down? |

The verse uses the *Kokinshū* technique of “elegant confusion,” borrowed from Chinese Six Dynasties poetry, asking a question to which the poet already knows the answer: the cherries fall even on a perfect day without a breath of wind because of the evanescence of all things, no matter how beautiful; indeed their evanescence makes them more beautiful still. The elegance of the topic and the way it is expressed reveal the sophistication of the poet, who notes the natural contradiction but feigns incomprehension, which then draws in the reader, who of course also knows the answer. The translation reflects much of the original form, and it adds very little by way of explanatory padding. This spare and literal style of translation by Keene and others remains one standard approach, in which the words are chosen and employed

in such a way as to closely reflect the original meanings, and sometimes even the order of introduced images, while at the same time conveying as much as possible of the original artistry.¹⁰⁹

It is invidious to draw an indelible line between the translations of scholars like Keene and those of poets and creative writers; one theme of the foregoing narrative has been the necessity for scholarship on the part of every conscientious translator from the Japanese, whether inside or outside academe. And most scholars (but not all), no matter how devoted to linguistic analysis or historical trajectories, try to reflect in their translations some of the artistry of the original poems. But it remains true that scholar-translators tend toward the literal end of the axis, whereas poet-translators tend toward freer versions: interlingual translation versus intersemiotic translation, to use Roman Jakobson's classic formulation.¹¹⁰ After the Second World War, Donald Keene was one of the former, and Kenneth Rexroth (1905-82), one of the latter. Iconoclastic and anti-institutional, Rexroth was a forerunner of the poets and translators of the Beat Generation and the Zen boom of the latter 1950's. In the same year that Keene's *Anthology of Japanese Literature* appeared, Rexroth published his *One Hundred Poems from the Japanese*, a work of a very different stamp. Rexroth relied on native informants for his translations from Japanese and Chinese, and perhaps in consequence he argued that scholarship was an actual impediment to poetic translation. He writes in respect to Chinese in "The Poet as Translator" (1961, 38) that in his opinion the best translators are those like himself that do not know the language: "Most Sinologists are philologists. They are all too close to the language as such and too fascinated by its special very un-English and yet curiously very English-like problems ever to see the texts as literature." The sole exception he makes is Bernard Karlgren, whom he judges to be "the only Sinologist in any language who is any good at all as a translator. Possibly this is because he translates not into his own Swedish but into another language—English" (76-78).

But interestingly, Rexroth's translation of the Tago Bay verse is still quite literal and very close to those of the scholars he dismisses (3):

I passed by the beach
At Tago and saw
The snow falling, pure white,
High on the peak of Fuji.

Rexroth is even somewhat backward-looking in his use of the quatrain form and capitalization, though elsewhere he uses five lines instead. He would have been better off had he done so here as well and made "pure white" a line of its own. As he has it, the impact of "pure white" is vitiated, coming at the end of the line and simply modifying "the snow falling," rather than becoming the central focus of the piece. But as if to emphasize further the overlap between scholar and poet translators, Keene includes in his own anthology some of Rexroth's translations.

The work of Harold G. Henderson (1889-1974), who like Keene taught Japanese literature at Columbia, is a reminder that the distinctions above about literal versus liberal or scholarly versus poetic are relative.¹¹¹ His translations in *An Introduction to Haiku: An Anthology of Poems and Poets from Bashō to Shiki* (1958) remain deeply

naturalized; though he uses three English lines, he rhymes the first and last, as in this version of a haiku by Chiyo (85):

Where the stream bed lies,
only there is darkness flowing:
fireflies!

Henderson was thoroughly schooled in the Japanese language (his *Handbook of Japanese Grammar* [1943] was widely used during and after the Second World War) and his attention to the original Japanese versions of the haiku was sometimes masked by the freedom of his rhymed English renditions. To compensate, he provides at the bottom of his pages literal trots, like this one:

Kawa | *bakari* | *yami* | *wa* | *nagarete* | *hotaru* | *kana*
River | only | darkness | as-for | flowing | fireflies | kana

But at times he too abandons rhyme in favor of what he himself calls a literal approach, as in his version of Chiyo's above-mentioned poem about the morning glories (1958, 83):

By morning glories
I have had my well-bucket captured—
and I borrow my water!

Asagao | *ni* | *tsurube* | *torarete* | *morai* | *-mizu*
Morning-glories | by | well-bucket | being-captured |
ask-for-and-get | water

Two other early postwar scholar-translators, Robert H. Brower (1923-1988) and Earl Miner (1927-2004), collaborated on *Japanese Court Poetry*, still the standard English introduction to the topic more than a half-century after its appearance in 1961.¹¹² They are translating the poems with the intention of using them in a work of literary history, and their renditions are often more explanatory than those of Keene in his anthology, where he had more leeway to pick examples he thought would work well in translation and be "interesting and enjoyable."¹¹³ Brower and Miner render the Tago Bay example thus (150):

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Tago no ura yu | Emerging from behind |
| Uchiidete mireba | The barrier shadow cast by Tago's shore, |
| Mashiro ni zo | I am startled by |
| Fuji no takane ni | The lofty cone of Fuji whitely dazzling |
| Yuki wa furikeru | Underneath its newly fallen snow. |

The lines do not rhyme, and they appear in shorter or longer units on the page to mimic the shorter or longer units of the original 5-7-5-7 and 7 syllables. But "the barrier shadow cast from the shore," and "cone," "dazzling," and "newly" are all interpolations by the translators, who are intent on giving readers intralinear commentary to help them negotiate the poetic terrain. "Startled by" is an amplification of the discovery or surprise suffix *-keru*. The translation retains something of the pedagogical, as if footnotes had been inserted into the body of the verse.

Anglophone translation styles continued to proliferate thereafter, each one striving for fidelity, though in different ways, and each one more literal than those of the first generation of translators but still varying in its ratio of literal to figurative.¹¹⁴ Two of the most prolific translators to appear in the decade following *Japanese Court Poetry* were Helen Craig McCullough (1918-98) and Edwin A. Cranston (1932-). Like Keene, McCullough began as a wartime translator, and she subsequently joined the faculty at the University of California, Berkeley. She never strayed from a strictly faithful rendering of meaning, but over her career she, like many of her predecessors noted above, moved from a relatively free format to a more literal and formally demanding one based, in her case, on 5-7-5-7-7 English syllables. Here is a *Kokinshû* poem that she first translated in 1968, which became a seven-line verse due to the small size of the page:¹¹⁵

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Omoiidete | Do you know, I wonder, |
| Koishiki toki wa | That when my love grows |
| Hatsukari no | unendurable |
| Nakite wataru to | I pace near your house, crying |
| Hito shirurame ya | aloud |
| | Like the first wild goose of autumn |
| | Winging its way across the sky. |

Years later, in her complete translation of *Kokinshû* (1985:162), she revised it thus:

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| omoiidete | Can you be aware |
| koishiki toki wa | that when my longing wells up |
| hatsukari no | I walk by your house, |
| nakite wataru to | crying like the passing geese, |
| hito shirurame ya | the first wild geese of autumn? |

Nakite wataru is a *kakekotoba* pivoting between “[the first geese] cry (call), going” and “[I] cry (weep), going.” Evidently to preserve the strict syllable count, her second version repeats “geese.” “First geese” (*hatsukari*) are conventionally associated with autumn, and McCullough has spelled that out in a nod to the explanatory approach, though it has no need to be mentioned in the original. And she has changed from the singular to the plural. A single goose worked better as a metaphor for a lonely man, but since geese fly in flocks, she changed to that later on. Convention in Japanese poetry was, after all, based on perceptions of reality. Here is another situation in which English requires a choice between singular and plural where Japanese does not. And the exaggerated “love grows unendurable” is replaced by the closer and at the same time more attractively restrained “longing wells up.” There is also a clear change in format which moves in the direction of the more literal; she indents the two short lines and abandons the capitalization at the beginning of each Japanese measure and English line, which makes the breaks between them less artificially emphatic (a matter to which we will return below).

In some cases, though, her change to strict syllable count requires considerable padding. Here is her first translation of *Kokinshû* 1: 27 (Archbishop Henjō [Sōjō Henjō 僧正遍昭], 816-90):¹¹⁶

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Asamidori | Pale green |
| Ito yorikakete | Twisted threads |
| Shiratsuyu o | Piercing beads |
| Tama ni mo nukeru | Of white dew– |
| Haru no yanagi ka | Willows in spring. |

In her later complete translation of *Kokinshū* (1985, 19) it becomes this:

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| asamidori | It twists together |
| ito yorikakete | leafy threads of tender green |
| shiratsuyu o | and fashions jewels |
| tama ni mo nukeru | by piercing clear, white dewdrops– |
| haru no yanagi ka | the willow tree in springtime. |

The verse is typical of *Kokinshū* in its artifice, here devoted to an extended metaphor. McCullough expands her later translation to include “leafy,” which helps to indicate what is being twisted together into metaphorical threads: the long and supple willow branches. Contrived as it may be, the notion of twisting branches into strings is a common one in waka poetry. “Green” now more accurately becomes “tender green” (*asamidori*, lit., light green, the color of early leaves), and “white dew” becomes “clear, white dewdrops” which fills out the syllable count but makes the reader wonder whether dewdrops can be both clear and white at once—perhaps they can, in the right light. The last line is padded as well, with “willows in spring” becoming “the willow tree in springtime,” and in the process number is again changed. All told, version two more accurately reflects the sense of the verse, and version one, the taut original form. Given that the semantic improvements of the second version could also have been applied to the first without also putting it into syllabic meter, one wonders if the additional padding for the syllabic version was worth the effort. Some poets like Chaucer and Marianne Moore composed syllabic verse in English, but they are a minority, given that English poetic lines (unlike those in French, for example) are fundamentally stress-based. But as we have seen above, syllabic-prosodic lines are also possible, and when so much else is lost in the translation of waka, it may feel rewarding to preserve whatever one can of its formal strictures, instead of (as Robert Frost said of free verse) playing tennis without a net.

Edwin A. Cranston, of Harvard University, is an example of a translator who is a scholar as well as a poet in his own right, and perhaps not surprisingly he developed a translation style that is at once semantically accurate and rich in expressive invention, moving somewhat more to the figurative. Here is his version of the Tago Bay verse in *Man'yōshū* (1993, 300):

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Tago no ura yu | When from Tago shore |
| Uchiidete mireba | We rowed far out and turned to look |
| Mashiro ni so | Pure white it was, |
| Fuji no takane ni | The towering cone of Fuji |
| Yuki wa furikeru | Gleaming under fallen snow! |

Here Cranston is faithful to the literal meaning of the verse, of course, and he retains a five-line format, but he allows himself more freedom than McCullough in actual word choice, in order to let the poem sing for modern readers, regardless of the fact that the

original is simpler in a literal rendition. *Uchiidete* (lit., come out) becomes “rowed far out,” *takane* (lit., high peak) becomes “towering cone,” and neither “it was” nor “gleaming” are in the original. He also envisions the *Man'yōshū* speaker to be water-borne and in the company of others. And perhaps because of the suffix *-keru*, which may also indicate a storytelling stance, Cranston sets the entire verse into the past; now the poet is not dramatically seeing the snowy peak but instead remembering it. Not to make such changes would for Cranston have been unfaithful to his conception of the *effect* of the original, which relies on the charged quality of the classical words, each of which appears in many other poems and thus takes on enormous connotative weight. But he too, like Dickins, Chamberlain, and other early translators, evolved over the course of his career, and in his later practice by his own estimation he “shifted from an ampler to a more astringent style.”

One translator of *waka* and *haiku* who explored the limits of the literal was William J. Higginson (1938-2008). Here is his version (1985, 13) of a verse by the one-time courtier turned Buddhist priest Saigyō 西行 (1118-90) (*Shinkokinshū* 3: 262):

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| michinobe ni | at the roadside |
| shimizu nagaruru | clear water flowing |
| yanagi kage | willow shade |
| shibashi tote koso | thinking to rest a while |
| tachitomaretsure [sic] | have come to a halt. |

The translation would seem to bear out Curtis Hidden Page’s pronouncement quoted above that the “extreme use of condensation and ellipsis, in English ... would wholly misrepresent the Japanese poem, even when it did not result in producing a mere enigma.” Here is a more forgiving rendition:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| michinobe ni | Beside the path |
| shimizu nagaruru | where a clear stream flows, |
| yanagi kage | the willow’s shade— |
| shibashi to te koso | I thought it would be a moment, no more, |
| tachitomaritsure | that I would pause beneath it. |

Higginson’s romanization and translation are all lower case, and both in the same word order. But the translation reads like five segments only partly connected, a semaphored version of an original that flows like the clear stream. And the point of the verse is missed: the poet realizes that he has lost track of time, so congenial is the restful spot amid the beauty of nature. At this point the translation in terms of both form and content misrepresents the original, and the “literal” is literal no longer. It is in fact as highly mediated as the mid-Victorian verses that began this essay

By the 1960’s, the literal style of translation, which had seemed to Noguchi and others to be so remote from English poetic habits of fixed meter, rhyme, varying lineation, and “poetic” diction, was now in tune with much of the modern English mainstream. In short, what had been a barbarized mode had now become natural. Japanese attitudes toward their own poetry had likewise modernized. The literary language that for centuries had been the prestige written form had already for decades been giving way to vernacular style (the so-called “amalgamation of vernacular and written,” *genbun itchi* 言文一致) under the influence of modern Western literature, and after the Second World War the

transition to the vernacular was essentially complete, not only in prose but also in poetry.¹¹⁷ But for some Japanese translators, classical Japanese poetry, with its literary diction and set form, continued to require a commensurately classical English approach. The shoe was now on the other foot, with Japanese rather than Anglophone translators cleaving to older models.

Honda Heihachirō, translator of *One Hundred Patriotic Poems* mentioned above, gave considerable thought thereafter to which English form to adopt, and he justified his choice in his essay “How to Translate the Tanka,” which prefaces his *The Man’yōshū: A New and Complete Translation* (1967). His remarks, in which he credits the influence of Taketomo Torao above, include this: “In my opinion poetry must first appeal to the ear. In the quatrain the flow of rhythm, if the verse is well written, is not disturbed, whereas in the quintet . . . hitches in the rhythm are unavoidable unless the measure be trochaic” (xii). This is as opposed to the five-line format he used in his *One Hundred Patriotic Poems* of 1944. But he, like Taketomo, finds trochaic meter to be unsuited to Japanese, and his explanation returns to our earlier discussion about that meter: “the trochaic measure . . . is a sprightly measure, not to say, warlike. It is like heady wine lacking in mellowness, especially when it is uniformly used. A good instance of it is Longfellow’s ‘Hiawatha’” (xi).¹¹⁸ In addition, he discovered that many iambic tetrameter English quatrains turn out to have 31 or 32 syllables, a fact which corresponds neatly to the 31 morae of the waka. He cites this example from A. E. Housman’s “A Shropshire Lad”:

Loveliest of trees, the cherry now
Is hung with bloom along the bough,
And stands about the woodland ride
Wearing white for Eastertide.

Honda therefore in the end agrees with Taketomo that the quatrain in iambic tetrameter with open rhyme (A-B-A-B) is the ideal form into which to translate waka. Here is his Tago Bay attempt in his translation of *Hyakunin Isshu*, entitled *One Hundred Poems from One Hundred Poets* (1957, 4):

From Tago Beach I view the sight,
Above the clouds, of Fuji’s brow
Sublime, all covered with the white
Of snow that seems there falling now.

Fuji’s “brow” would seem to have been borrowed from Dickins. He also provides the modern Japanese in five vertical lines as he did in *One Hundred Patriotic Poems*, but then a romanized version at the bottom in two horizontal lines rather than five, divided into 17 syllables in line one and 14 in line two, but without spaces between the measures. The English lines are composed of eight syllables each, making a total of 32, which is very close to the 33 in this Japanese verse (or 31 when chanted). And as he states above, they are in iambic tetrameter. This, together with the A-B-A-B rhyme, is a remarkable formal accomplishment. And he renounces “poetic” vocabulary but invokes the charged English word “sublime.” As we have seen in the case of other translators, though, Honda’s theory is more effective than his practice, for he is driven by the self-imposed exigencies of rhythm and rhyme to conclude his version with the unnatural line “of snow that seems there falling now.” Honda’s motivation for the complex rhyme was not only

aesthetic; he hoped that his translations, which divide into two equal parts with the same rhyme schemes, would allow English speakers to play the *utagaruta* card game with which the *Hyakunin isshu* collection is widely associated in Japan. Honda summarizes the game thus:

Two sets of cards, the reading cards and the playing cards, consisting of one hundred cards respectively, are used. On the reading card the whole poem is written or printed, while on the playing card only the last two lines are given.

The game is usually played between two parties made up of four or five persons. Each party faces the other with fifty playing cards spread before them on the floor. As the reader recites one of the well-shuffled reading cards, the players try to find and take the corresponding playing card faster than the others. In this way the party that has first finished with their allotted cards wins. (103-04)

Obviously the players who have memorized the hundred poems can begin to search for the card bearing the last two lines of a verse from the moment they hear the first few syllables read aloud, thus getting the jump on those who have not memorized the verses.

Honda returned to this poem in his complete translation of *Man'yōshū* (1967, 31):

From Tago Beach I see the sight
of Fuji's lofty brow serene
now covered over with the white
of snow descending all unseen.

"View the sight" becomes the more euphonic "see the sight," and "above the clouds," which is not in the original, is excised. "Sublime" has become "serene," both adjectives being additions by the translator that introduce an explanatory element to a verse that was originally remarkable for its pure description. And like Miyamoto, he concludes that *tago no ura yu* in *Man'yōshū* and *tago no ura ni* in *Shinkokinshū/Hyakunin isshu* mean the same thing. The first four lines of this verse are more literal than in his version of ten years earlier. But while the last line nicely pursues the sibilance of lines one and two, Honda is again driven by the self-imposed challenges of rhythm and rhyme to conclude his version with "descending all unseen." "All unseen" can only refer to the fact that the mountain is too lofty for the snowfall itself to be seen, only the resultant accumulation, but this is an interpolation, and in any case snow does not "descend." And he makes no distinction between *furikeru* (has fallen [and I notice it now]) in *Man'yōshū* and *furitsutsu* (falls and falls) in *Shinkokinshū/Hyakunin isshu*. Honda elsewhere in his *Man'yōshū* collection experiments with different lineations and rhyme schemes, but the quatrain in iambic tetrameter remains his ideal. His insistence on form and sound, though, requires him to sacrifice significant content, as seen here in his version of the *chōka* that precedes the Tago Bay *waka*, a more literal translation of which was provided here earlier:

Since heaven parted from the earth
there has been standing high
Mt. Fuji in Suruga's skies.
When I look up, I see the sun
itself quite hidden by the mount;
even the moon rides all obscured;
the white clouds dare not pass its front.

Our songs of praise shall never end:
Oh Fuji peerless, Oh divine!

Honda has managed to impose iambic tetrameter throughout the whole, and some of the lines rhyme. But he leaves out “and in every season/there is snow fallen upon it” (*tokijiku so yuki wa furikeru*), the critical passage to which the Tago Bay envoy responds. In its entirety, the translation is almost a parody of the sublimity of the original. But Honda was remarkable for his attempt to match form with form, and his collection remains useful as a convenient one-volume overview of the entire anthology, though one to be used with caution.

Actually the notion of a four-beat English line has much to recommend it to Anglophone translators, given that the waka measure, when chanted conventionally, likewise contains four beats.¹¹⁹ This is due to the fact that the short measures (numbers one and three) are followed by a pause of one beat in length. The Tago Bay poem in the original is thus chanted as follows (it will be recalled that in the case of hypermetric lines where a vowel that ends one syllable precedes a single-vowel syllable, as in *ta-go-no-u-ra* or *u-chi-i-de-te*, the two vowels elide):

| | | | | |
|--------|-----------|-------|------|--|
| ta go | no [u] ra | yu - | - - | |
| u chi | [i]de te | mi re | ba - | |
| ma shi | ro ni | so - | - - | |
| fu ji | no ta | ka ne | ni - | |
| yu ki | wa fu | ri ke | ru - | |

Thus Kawamoto Kōji points out that “when serving as the reciter in the New Year’s game of poetry cards (*utagaruta*), we stretch the vowel sounds at certain fixed locations in each poem ... in this way when we recite poetry in the traditional manner we unconsciously are marking quadruple time, with two morae to each beat” (2000, 176-77). This form of chanting is not limited to the poems in *Hyakunin issu*, of course.

Honda was a protean translator not only of *Man’yōshū* and *Hyakunin issu*, but also of *Kokinshū* and *Shinkokinshū*, among other works, and he had ample opportunity to develop opinions about his craft, like this (1967, xiv):

To translate either prose or verse is not easy. And we must admit the translator’s lot is hard without his being snubbed. All translators may be said to be in the same boat. They, therefore, might do well to sympathize with one another ... To be frank, I, for one, much prefer a good translation with mistakes to a bad one without mistakes. A good translation with mistakes does less harm to the original than a bad translation with few mistakes. For the reader can recognize and enjoy something of the beauty of the original work through the former, whilst the latter only leads him to consider that the original is not worth while to read.

For all Honda’s prodigious energy, his translations do not succeed in conveying the beauty and depth of the originals. But his observations on four-beat lines are thought-provoking

Two decades later, another Japanese translator, Suga Teruo (1907-?), demanded unabridged adherence to the Japanese originals. His philosophy put him at odds with most of his Japanese predecessors, as he charmingly notes in the front matter of his complete translation of *Man’yōshū*, where he recollects (in the third person) staying at

an inn and reading two English translations of *Man'yōshū* by Japanese colleagues: "One of them was subtitled 'A Complete English Translation' and the other had 'One Thousand Poems.' All at once he groaned heavily, because one was far from 'Complete'. Then he opened the other; and again he groaned, this time with indignation, something like a cry coming up to his throat."¹²⁰ Suga then goes on to take issue with omissions of words, *makurakotoba* epithets, proper names of people and places, and a failure to observe repetitions as well as the 5-7 meter of the originals. The previous works he faults are Honda's "complete" translation and the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai selection of a thousand verses. We have indeed seen that while the Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai version eschews archaic vocabulary, it also omits many of the ancient epithets in the original poems. Honda does the same and also elides most of the prose notes. Suga's insistence on formal correspondence is laudable in theory, but again in practice it proves for him untenable. Here is his translation of the Tago Bay verse, which he calls a "poemette of response," by which he means a *waka* envoy.¹²¹

From Tagonoura
To the open main I came
And Lo! just in front
Mt. Fuji is covered white
With the snow on its summit.

The lines exactly reproduce the syllable count of the original, including six in the first line (which, again, elide to five when chanted). But there is no "just in front" in the original, nor any antique "open main" or "Lo!" The mind boggles at the invention and the effort required to impose his Procrustean formula on more than 4,500 originals. But in the end Suga's *travail de Bénédicte* in replicating the formal qualities of *Man'yōshū* misrepresents its essence. And yet his collection proves an even better resource than Honda's (though in three heavy volumes, less convenient) for providing to English readers a quick overview of the anthology, complete with epithets, repetitions, and, most valuably, complete prose headnotes and footnotes. But neither Honda nor Suga supply romanizations of the original verses, perhaps because of space.

As frequently alluded to in the above discussion of literality and liberality, one issue that has exercised Anglophone translators the most acutely is lineation. It is worth lingering over this issue here, since, as E. Bruce Brooks cogently observes, "Prosody is not a sort of shawl tucked around the shoulders of a poetic idea, it is the very shape and breath of the idea" (1975, 272).¹²² Though everyone knows that the *waka* is composed of five measures of 5, 7, 5, 7, and 7 syllables or *morae*, most of the Western post-war poets mentioned so far here contend that those measures ought to be reflected in five English lines and be matched side-by-side with the five measures of the romanized original.¹²³ (It is interesting that translators who use this format generally locate the romanized Japanese on the left, despite the fact that English readers have to skip over each line of the Japanese to get to the English on the right.) Cranston, for example, favors the dual five-line approach because for him "the double track is mutually enhancing: the convenience of being allowed to read back and forth between the two versions gives a pleasure to be derived from neither alone" (1993, xxii). This is not, however, a pleasure that was shared by the original readers of the anthology. But modern Japanese editions of *Man'yōshū* usually represent the poems not only in their complex original

forms but also in modern orthography and in modern Japanese translations, and this perhaps provides the Japanese reader with something of the back-and-forth movement that Cranston enjoys.

But there are opponents equally committed to literal translation who insist that the waka is essentially a one-line poem, and therefore that one English line is the more legitimate approach. The arguments of this camp relate both to syntax and to visual appearance on the page. Though we have seen that Taketomo Torao recommended the quatrain form for translation, he warned that “syllabic phrases, 5-7-5-7-7 in the *tanka* are not *lines* in a stanza ... Japanese *tanka* could be written in a single line without losing its harmony” (1942, 7). Mark Morris later concurred, writing that Japanese poets “did not build their poems stacking line against individual line” and that the “focusing power of poetic geometry” causes a five-line English format to overemphasize the breaks between the five units of the original” (1986, 568-69). In terms of layout of the page, opponents of the five-line form note that the waka is not conventionally represented on the Japanese page with the five measures oriented in five rows as if it were a five-line English poem (*pace* Honda above). It instead appears in Japanese environments most often in one line.¹²⁴ The five-line version, they continue, is a creation of Anglophone translators, a “japanologist’s box” that does not reflect the nature of the original.¹²⁵

It is certainly true that the lineation of an English poem is fixed and that subsequent reproductions must replicate the original, because lineation reflects artistic choices and conditions reader response. Even fixed-format English poems like the sonnet will traditionally be written in 14 lines on the page and not left up to the requirements of page size or printer caprice. This is not true for the waka. Since it is by definition composed of five measures, it can theoretically be written down in any fashion on the page that the writer chooses, because it will be mentally apprehended in five parts by every reader or listener, regardless. At one point in *The Tale of Genji*, for example, Prince Hotaru is depicted writing waka in three lines (*mikudari*) while the Rokujō Lady writes in one line (*hitokudari*) and other ladies write in an artistic “reed hand” (*ashide* 葦手).¹²⁶

A proponent of five-part lineation might respond that originally there was in fact an aural relationship between waka measures and English lines, in that both were based on breath. As indicated earlier, when a waka is chanted aloud in a formal environment, there are caesurae after each measure and particularly long ones after the short first and third. The poet Kensai 兼載 (1452-1510), for example, counseled a three-breath chant for the verses of three measures (17 morae) in a linked-verse sequence and a two-breath chant for those of two measures (14 morae).¹²⁷ The medieval collection of exemplary tales (*setsuwa*) *Kokon chomonjū* (1254) relates one instance when a poet, required to compose a verse on “the first geese of autumn,” began with “the haze of springtime.” The anecdote continues, “When the first five syllables were chanted, those of the team of the right broke into laughter. But their laughter ceased when the remainder was read.” (The poem ended “but now their cries are heard again/above the autumn mist” [*ima zo naku naru akigiri no ue ni*].)¹²⁸ This confirms that there were caesurae after the chanted measures. But in the case of haiku, at least, this view of a three-breath chant is not universal; Kenneth Yasuda, for example, writes that “the number of syllables that can be uttered in a breath makes the natural length of haiku” (1957, 34).

As mentioned earlier, grammatical particles may appear in the middle or the end of a measure, but never at the beginning, a stricture clearly related to oral delivery.¹²⁹ The

first four measures of early waka often tend to join semantically into two groups of five-seven (*goshichichō* 五七調), in a pattern of **5-7**, 5-7, 7, while poems of the medieval age often exhibit what is called by contrast seven-five grouping (*shichigochō* 七五調), in a pattern of 5, **7-5**, 7-7. These internal relationships are obfuscated in a one-line approach.

As for the argument that the waka is traditionally written in one line, this is because the waka often only runs to one line when written in a manuscript or type-set on a page; if for some reason space runs out before the poem does, it will continue to a second line. But rendering the waka in one line in English is misleading to the neophyte reader because it gives the impression that there are no intrinsic divisions at all in the original, which is patently not the case. While it is true that the five English lines may not function exactly like the five Japanese measures, the “one-liner” fails to alert the English reader new to waka that the Japanese poem has any formal strictures at all.

Indeed, the one-line translations of Hiroaki Sato (1942-), for example, often appear in two lines or even three due to limitations of space on the page. Here is his version of the Tago Bay poem as a “one-liner”:¹³⁰

Coming out on the beach of Tago, I look: pure white—on Fuji the
lofty peak, the snow’s falling.

Perhaps the indentation of the continuation of the poem was done to signal the translator’s desire to avoid implying a second full line. Here is his translation as it would be recast into five parts:

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| tago no ura yu | Coming out |
| uchiidete mireba | on the beach of Tago, I look: |
| mashiro ni so | pure white— |
| fuji no takane ni | on Fuji the lofty peak, |
| yuki wa furikeru | the snow’s falling. |

Each measure of the original forms a unit of suspense; at each pause the listener savors what has just been chanted and conjures up a skein of possibilities that goes on to be successively modified as the poem continues. It is precisely from the ongoing dialectic between poetic form and audience imagination that the verse derives much of its interest and effect. Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren write that the English line is best defined as a “unit of attention” (1960, 562). It would seem that here the five Japanese measures correspond to that definition. An alternative to the five-line translation might be a single line (or however many actual lines on the page are required) with slashes indicating the five parts, but the five constituent parts of the Japanese and the English are more difficult to correlate in such a system, and it is visually brutal. But one acknowledgement of the essential difference between the Japanese and the English constituent units has been the increasingly frequent use in translation of lower-case letters rather than capitals to start each English line, thus implying the greater continuity in the Japanese original as well as the lack of differentiation in Japanese between upper-case and lower-case forms.

In the translations enumerated above, the choice of lineation style, like diction, correlates with nationality. We have seen above that European and American translators gradually abandoned ornate Victorian diction in favor of a more terse and literal approach. In lineation as well, after Chamberlain and Page, they heavily favored a five-line format that reflected the five measures of the Japanese original. Japanese

translators, by contrast, were slower to abandon mid-19th-century English diction, and they instead preferred the quatrain. Both groups, then, were specifically working outside of their comfort zones, the non-native speakers of Japanese adopting a more Japanese-style lineation together with a more compressed Japanese-style diction, and the non-native speakers of English adopting a more traditional English lineation and lexicon. Both were barbarizing from the point of view of their native tongues, but from the point of view of the target language, the Japanese were naturalizing more than their Anglophone colleagues. Both were trying to be faithful—the Anglophones to original Japanese form and diction, and the Japanese to what they perceived to be a classical English poetic style that they felt best reflected that of the similarly classical waka. It may also be that over time the quatrain form came to be considered among Japanese translators as a sort of accepted translationese (*hon'yakuchō* 翻訳調) for waka, though Taketomo and Honda above are eloquent in their reasons for making that choice. It is ironic, though, that the archaized and often padded quatrain form chosen by most Japanese translators was exactly what Yone Noguchi would have opposed.

It is also necessary to add that while the original orthography for waka transcription was variable, formal strictures did exist in some environments. Sometimes a particular critic or school of poetry required a specific format; Fujiwara Kiyosuke 藤原清輔 (12th century) in *Fukurōzōshi* 袋草紙 (Bag book, ca. 1156-59), for example, counsels the poet to write waka in three full lines (*gyō* 行) and then a final three characters (4). Another text recommends a two-line form in some circumstances and a three-line form in others.¹³¹ The Asukai 飛鳥井 house of poets inscribed its waka in three lines and five characters.¹³² In the case of poem strips (*tanzaku* 短冊), waka are often by convention written in two lines, breaking at the caesura between the upper three units and the lower two.¹³³ And some poets in certain circumstances even employ “scattered writing” (*chirashigaki* 散らし書き), in which the characters are artfully situated throughout the page.

Over history, then, a variety of waka formats have been employed by Japanese poets and calligraphers, and while the five-line format continues to be the one most frequently used by Anglophone translators, other solutions continue to be explored. Translating in formats other than five lines does, however, require a more learned readership, one already aware that the originals are composed in five measures of set quantities. Again, one alternative to the pair of five-part boxes set side-by-side is to provide the translation alone in five lines and then, above or below, the romanization in one or more continuous lines, perhaps subdivided by spaces or slashes. But it complicates the back-and-forth reading method. Placing the romanization below the translated poem serves as a reminder to the reader that, as Morris observes, Japanese measures and English lines are not completely analogous.

A different solution to the problem of formatting waka in English was made by Edward G. Seidensticker (1921-2007), a prolific academic who translated not only *The Tale of Genji* (1976) but also modern Japanese classics. In his *Genji* translation, he renders waka in a two-line format, without romanization. In view of the fact that there are nearly eight hundred waka in the tale, the two-line format and the lack of romanization saves a considerable number of pages in an already very long volume.¹³⁴ As seen above, though, while all waka are composed of five separate measures, the actual syntactical breaks may vary, and often the poems in the original are not syntactically divided into the two halves in which they appear in his format. But that format, which in addition is

block-indented on the page, does alert the reader to the basic fact that a poem is being indited. Royall Tyler (1936-) in his version of *Genji* (2001) also uses two lines for his waka, again saving space, but he comes closer to the original poems than Seidensticker, since he translates syllabically, with the top line having 17 syllables, divided into 5-7-5, and the bottom one, 14, divided into 7-7.

English translations of *The Tale of Genji*, in fact, now span about five generations, beginning with Suematsu Kenchō's in 1882, and they constitute another useful example of the trajectory of Anglophone waka translation over the decades. We saw earlier that Suematsu's partial translation of *Genji* sets the waka off from the body of the text and renders them as rhymed quatrains with "poetic" diction. Arthur Waley then produced the first (almost) complete translation of *Genji* from 1926 to 1933 and chose the exact opposite approach. It may be recalled that in his earlier book *Japanese Poetry: The Uta* he expressed the belief that the waka could "only rightly be enjoyed in the original." Faced with nearly 800 of them in *Genji*, he carried his conviction to the logical extreme and declined to translate them as poetry at all, but instead only as prose paraphrases in the body of the text and marked only by quotation marks or occasionally by a word or two from the narrator explaining that a poem is being composed. In most cases there is no other formal indication that they are poems at all, and there is no romanization. Faced by these two antithetical approaches—the mid-Victorian naturalization of Suematsu and the rejection of poetic translation in its entirety by Waley—the four subsequent translators of the tale found increasingly literal ways to recuperate the waka poems it includes and accord them the importance they deserve as paradigmatic moments of lyrical response to events syntagmatically narrated in the prose. Seidensticker had no more love for waka poems than Waley did, but at least he renders them in two lines and separates them from the prose. A generation later, Helen Craig McCullough created in 1994 a partial translation of the work and moved the bar further toward the literal, treating the waka in *Genji* in the same way that she had in her translation of *Kokinshū* introduced above, in five English lines rendered in 5-7-5-7-7 syllables, with the five Japanese measures romanized *en face*. Then in 2001, Royall Tyler followed suit, likewise producing a literal and syllabic translation but divided into two lines. And with the most recent translation, by Dennis Washburn (1954-) in 2015, the needle began again to move toward the more naturalized and even experimental; while he maintains emphasis on waka as an art of set form and translates it with literal diction, he chooses to represent that form in an innovative manner, with three lines, block indented. Each of the three lines, moreover, contains the same number of syllables, though that number varies from poem to poem. These five generations of *The Tale of Genji* translations thus in broad strokes recapitulate the ontogeny of Anglophone poetic translations of waka described here earlier, the heavily naturalized giving way to the more literal, and then that literal quality being variously nuanced in yet newer versions.

Royall Tyler is also notable for his translations of Nō plays, and his renditions of them over two decades show a similar trajectory. Nō plays, a product of Japan's medieval era, contain waka and other metered passages along with non-metered ones, together with perhaps the most complicated paronomasia in the entire premodern corpus.¹³⁵ As such, they are particularly recalcitrant to translation. A brief examination of a passage from the play *Matsukaze* (Pining wind) in three different

translations by Tyler will suffice to show both the development of his translation practice and the difficulty of translating works in that dramatic genre. His first translation of the play was in a fluent and polished “transparent” style (1970, 18-34). But some years later, frustrated by the compromises required by that approach, he retranslated the play in a much more literal fashion. At that time, he made these remarks on his changing philosophy: “One person who read my new *Matsukaze* commented that my first translation was far kinder to the reader. I agree. However, my intention was not to be kind to the reader, but to transcribe the texture of the Japanese. And the Japanese is anything but kind to the reader” (1978, 2).

The lines in the passage below are chanted by the chorus in the voice of the main character Matsukaze, a woman who lives with her sister by the shore in poverty and isolation, boiling brine for salt and longing for her aristocratic lover, now dead. She is addressing a traveling monk. It is a metered passage composed largely of segments of alternating seven and five syllables and reads thus: *kage hazukashiki wa ga sugata, kage hazukashiki wa ga sugata, shinobiguruma o hiku shio no, nokoreru tamarimizu, itsu made sumi wa hatsubeki*.¹³⁶ A nearly literal translation runs, “my shameful reflected form, my shameful reflected form hidden cart drawn tide’s lingering pools how long will stay clear?/[will I stay] alive [in this world]?” which contains pivots between “form hidden” and “hidden cart,” then “cart drawn, and “[with]drawn tides” and then a pun on *sumi* (“clear”/“alive”). The demands on the translator are obviously daunting.

In his first attempt, Tyler completely naturalizes the passage and put it in the mouths of both Matsukaze and her sister (1970, 23):

Our reflections seem to shame us!¹³⁷
 Yes, they shame us! Here, where we shrink from men’s eyes,
 Here, where we shrink from men’s eyes,
 Drawing our timorous cart;
 The withdrawing tide
 Leaves stranded pools behind,
 How long do they remain?

In this rendition, the double meanings have been spelled out separately, only hinting at the wordplay involved (“shrink from men’s eyes”/“timorous cart” and “drawing our timorous cart”/“withdrawing tide”). The metaphorical application of the final pun is left to the imagination; spelled out, it means “the lingering pools [in which our reflections appear]—how long will they stay clear/how long will we stay alive in this world?”

As Tyler points out above, his second version moves to the other extreme and tries to show the wordplay in commensurate English. The lines are now attributed to Matsukaze alone (1978, 94):

This image shames me my own form this image
 shames me my own form shrinks low, a wain drawn
 withdrawing tides leave lingering pools how long
 to live on?

In this new rendition, the repeated first two lines are repeated *in toto* as they are in the original, and the *kakekotoba* are cleverly replicated: *sugata shinobiguruma* becomes “my own form shrinks low, a wain” (“a wain” being “a cart,” but which also sounds like

“away”), and *shinobiguruma hiku shio* becomes “a wain drawn withdrawing tides.” But the final pun on clear/live is still abandoned.

The demands on the Anglophone reader are indeed great here, but they were also challenging for Japanese audiences (today even more so). In such an environment, a smooth and user-friendly English translation is a misrepresentation of the original. And yet Tyler also realizes that this kind of literal rendition likewise misrepresents the original but on a different level, for while the original is difficult, it is *unobtrusively* difficult in Japanese, whereas the difficulty of the English is obtrusive in the extreme. And so some years later still, Tyler re-translated the play yet a third time, synthesizing his two earlier approaches (1992, 194-95):¹³⁸

Image of shame, my reflection
 image of shame, my reflection
 shrinks away, withdrawing
 tides leave behind stranded pools,
 and I, how long will I linger on?

This third version departs more from the original Japanese than the second version does, and the carriage has been sacrificed together with the final pun. But Tyler has supplied a paronomastic equivalence, cleverly using the line break after “withdrawing” to let the word more effectively shuttle back and forth in English between “reflection shrinks away, withdrawing” and “withdrawing tides,” thus mimicking the original pivot to dramatic effect. If his third version still seems to push the envelope of natural English, it should be reemphasized that the original was also far from normal medieval Japanese speech and is even further now.

Certain other recent translators, like Washburn above, have attempted similar compromises between the literal and the figurative in waka translation. Despite the advantage of the five-line translation format to represent in English the internal structure of the original, and despite its continued adoption in many scholarly translations, other approaches have been suggested both by the variability of the formatting of the originals and perhaps by analogous formal experiments by modern and postmodern Anglophone poets, in the interest of the strangeness that makes the reader look again and see anew. Ian Hideo Levy (1950-), for example, uses varying lineation in his partial translation of *Man'yōshū*, *The Ten Thousand Leaves* of 1981. Here is his six-line version of the Tago Bay verse (178):

Coming out
 from Tago's nestled cove,
 I gaze:
 white, pure white
 the snow has fallen
 on Fuji's lofty peak.

His displacement of “I gaze” to a separate line is a departure from the five-measure divisions of the original, but it adds further emphasis to the object of the gaze thereafter, the pure white snow, “pure” being justified by the prefix *ma* of the original *mashiro*. Levy's translation of the first five books of *Man'yōshū* includes all the headnotes and footnotes in the original, but no romanization.

Likewise Peter Macmillan chooses a six-line format for his version:¹³⁹

Sailing out on the white crests
of the Bay of Tago, I look up.
There before me
even more dazzling–
snow still falling
on Fuji crowned in white.

But overall MacMillan has created a very different poem from the original. He commits himself to the interpretation that the poet is not walking but is instead aboard a boat, sailing out “on the white crests,” which are imagined by the translator. Even more dazzling than these white crests, he continues, is the snow on Fuji’s peak. This comparison between the waves and Fuji’s snow is Macmillan’s addition. So too is the line “there before me,” which a more literal version would elide, as well as the metaphor of Fuji “crowned” in white.

Like so many others in this survey, MacMillan later became more literal in his approach. Here is his five-line Tago Bay translation from a decade later (2018, 7):

Coming out on the Bay of Tago,
there before me,
Mount Fuji–
snow still falling on her peak,
a splendid cloak of white.

The order of images is still different, with the white peak appearing at the end, and “splendid” is an explanatory addition, but the meaning more closely reflects the original, and “cloak of white” is an effective translation, at once accurate and artistic, of *shirotae* (white as mulberry cloth).

Here is a more experimental “concrete poem” by MacMillan, of verse no. 3 of the *Hyakunin isshu* collection, by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro (2018, 5):¹⁴⁰

The
long
tail
of
the
copper
pheasant
trails,
drags
on
and
on
like
this
long
night
alone
in
the
lonely
mountains,

longing
for
my
love.

A more conservative five-line translation of the poem reads thus:

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| ashihiki no | Through the long night, |
| yamadori no o no | long as the tail, the flowing tail |
| shidario no | of the pheasant |
| naganagashi yo o | in the foot-wearying mountains, |
| hitori ka mo nemu | am I to sleep alone? |

“Foot-wearying” is one possible translation for the *makurakotoba* epithet *ashihiki*, often used in *Man'yōshū* and elsewhere to modify “mountain” (*yama*). Macmillan, by contrast, creates a visual concomitant of the meaning of the verse, at once recalling traditional *chirashigaki* but at the same time defamiliarizing. Clearly there are all manner of ways to continue to “make it new.”¹⁴¹ And his verse serves as another example of the fact that different environments and purposes require different forms; Macmillan’s version is too personal to work in, say, a literary history, but it is invigorating as a work of art in its own right. The pendulum that swung so clearly from the naturalized to the literal in previous decades is here returning in the other direction.

Less revolutionary new approaches have combined the old and new, retaining the five-line approach but manipulating spacing and punctuation to reflect how the five measures of a certain verse interrelate. One example of this is the *Kokinshū* translation by Laurel Rasplica Rodd and Mary Catherine Henkenius (1996), and the *Shinkokinshū* translation by Rodd alone (2015). These versions not only retain the original syllable count and try to maintain the same order in which images appear in the original, but they also eschew linear capitalization and punctuation, which can obscure instances of wordplay; they favor spaces instead, “to indicate possible pauses when reading” (1996, iv). Here is Rodd’s version of the Tago Bay verse in *Shinkokinshū/hyakunin issu* (2015, 278 [vol. 1]):

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| tago no ura ni | when setting out I |
| uchiidete mireba | gaze across the bay of Tago |
| shirotae no | on the towering |
| fuji no takane ni | linen-white crest of Fuji |
| yuki wa furitsutsu | the snow continues to fall |

Steven D. Carter (1950-) too has experimented with varying the indentation and capitalization of waka within the five-line compass, beginning every new sentence in the original flush left, and then, if it continues to a next line in English, indenting it slightly, and then if it continues further, indenting it yet again, as in his *Shinkokinshū/Hyakunin issu* version of the Tago Bay verse (1991, 207):

At Tago Bay
I came out, and looked afar-
to see the hemp-white
of Mount Fuji’s lofty peak
under a flurry of snow.

tago no ura ni / uchiidete mireba / shirotae no / fuji no
takane ni / yuki wa furitsutsu

Like Cranston, Carter sets the event in the past. He also favors the approach of providing the romanization in running lines beneath the verse, the five units separated by forward slashes, which again perhaps somewhat assuages the proponents of the one-line view. The main effect of this is to let the translation visually stand alone, which parenthetically emphasizes Walter Benjamin's observation, noted above, that every translation becomes its own work of art.

Another area of contention is romanization. It has become a common practice among scholarly translators to provide with their translations the Japanese characters of the base text they are using, with or without corresponding romanization. But as mentioned above, often the orthography is not that of the original manuscript taken as the base text but one chosen by a modern editor for increased clarity. Romanization is a useful addition to English translations since it need not foreclose interpretation by limiting itself to one specific *kanji* choice and, as pointed out earlier, it gives even the reader who does not know Japanese a notion of how the original sounded.

But romanization too opens up another problem for translations from ancient Japanese in particular, since the sound of the language has changed over the centuries. Here, for example, is a poem (*Man'yōshū* 15: 3636) from the early 8th century, romanized according to modern pronunciation:¹⁴²

iebito wa
kaeri haya ko to
iwaishima
iwaimaturamu
tabi yuku ware o

And here is one approximation of how the verse may have sounded when it was composed in the 8th century:¹⁴³

ipebito pa
kaperi paya ko to
ipapisima
ipapimaturamu
tabi yuku ware wo

The alliteration of the original has turned into something very different in modern pronunciation.

Perhaps more importantly, premodern Japanese poetry eventually perfected a kind of classical poetic language meant to serve as a timeless standard of elegance in which poets born in different eras and speaking in different Japanese dialects could share. Once the archaic and arcane *Man'yōshū* writing system had been simplified, it remained the same for the next thousand years, even as pronunciation changed (the writing system was not revised until after the Second World War; see n. 89). A unified romanization based on modern pronunciation regardless of diachronic aural changes does reflect this continuity, and it facilitates easier recognition of intertextual relationships across the ages. This was Edwin A. Cranston's rationale for rendering all his translations in his multi-volume *A Waka Anthology* in a standardized modern romanization (1993, xix-xx).

The classical Japanese waka of the imperial anthologies constituted a high style that while still in the vernacular rigorously eschewed the colloquial, and arguments between poets about what new lexical items might be introduced could turn vitriolic. Some translators nevertheless prefer to imagine their favorite court practitioners of the high poetic orthodoxy to be expressing themselves as we might speak today, with colloquialisms and contractions. Here, for example, the classical poet speaks as a modern American might:¹⁴⁴

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| kumo haruru | The clouds dissolved |
| arashi no oto wa | But the storm's sound still lingers on |
| matsu ni are ya | In swishing pine boughs – |
| tsuki mo midori no | Maybe why some of the tree's blue |
| iro ni haetsutsu | Tints the moon up there now. |

But the poet, Saigyō, most emphatically did not compose his highly orthodox verses using a breezy colloquial. Saigyō at the hands of this translator becomes an itinerant Beat poet, like the would-be Zen adepts in Jack Kerouac's *Dharma Bums*. The translator here also changes the color of the pines from green (*midori*) to blue. And though modern translators may find formality off-putting and try to render classical verse more colloquially to make it more approachable to the general reader, what we today might consider formal and off-putting could instead be admired in premodern times, as it marked an author as having enviable erudition and, by extension, credibility and authority. And the premodern audience was accustomed to social hierarchy and interpersonal reserve. This respect for high style was one aspect of court poetry that the early Anglophone translators understood very well.

As a corollary to this, François Jullien (2004) has pointed out in his *Eloge de la fadeur* (translated as *In Praise of Blandness*) that there is a recurring tendency in Chinese literature (and in Japanese as well) not to see blandness as a deficiency but sometimes as a virtue, the literary enjoyment of the taste of water, so to speak. And many verses in poem sequences were meant to be unremarkable “background” (*ji* 地) verses in order to highlight other “pattern” (*mon* 文) ones—cleansing the palate between courses, as it were. The translator working in a literal vein will retain that blandness when it occurs, in the hope that the reader will develop an affinity for the occasionally lukewarm. After all, we read in part for what the text can teach us.

Classical Japanese audiences had a greater tolerance for repetition and convention than do most modern Anglophone ones. Like the Hebrew of the Torah, classical Japanese poetry was what Robert Alter has called a “conventionally delimited language” (1997, xi). The poets of premodern Japan admired innovation, to be sure, but also convention; as Hatooka Akira nicely puts it, “conventional expressions were at that time actively and positively employed; more than simply being stereotypes, they represented a search for superlative models.”¹⁴⁵ It is convention, and the subtle plays upon it over the centuries, that make each poem greater than the sum of its parts. And sometimes social needs call out for conventional expressions that reinforce group solidarity. Does the translator retain such conventionality in order to be faithful to the letter of the original and misrepresent to a modern audience the interest the verse held for the ancients? Dickins, for one, thought so, and (at least in theory) he tried to retain such “conventionalisms.” Or does the translator simulate analogous interest in the modern translation with more inventive phraseology, and thus misrepresent the letter of the original? Translator, traitor, indeed. F. Scott Fitzgerald once observed that “the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function.” Here is where the translator as artist must have such an

intelligence, cleave to the Middle Way (*Zhong Yong*), and selectively borrow from both approaches to varying degrees in varying environments, while being resigned to being a traitor still.

The history outlined above is not meant as a polemic to establish an ideal English form and style for the translation of classical Japanese poetry, but instead as a descriptive overview of how Anglophone approaches have changed over time, and how they continue to change. One dominant trajectory emphasized above, however, was the gradual development up through the Second World War of an approach that tended to cleave more closely to the literal side of the balance between literal and figurative. That only became possible as translators and their audiences came to accept Japanese poetry as having its own nature and its own value and tried to evoke that nature and value *through* the medium of English, rather than imposing English values upon it.

Notes

1. From a seaman's account of Ranald MacDonald's arrival in Japan. In Lewis and Murakami 1923, 272. On MacDonald, see also Schodt 2003.
2. David Ewick (2004, 106) estimates the number of monographs on Japanese subjects published in English alone just between 1854 and 1903 to have been more than 3,000.
3. The compendium is *Shinpen kokka taikan*, which contains 1,162 different collections comprising *waka* and some verses by Japanese poets writing in Chinese.
4. See, in particular, Mostow 1996. Mostow covers much of the same terrain as this essay does, but from a more political perspective.
5. I make no distinction in this essay between translators with the ability to read Japanese texts and those who collaborate with informants.
6. In this paper I use the term "literal" very broadly to apply variously to lexical content and/or to form, i.e., matching in English the number of measures (*ku* 句) in the original (five in *waka*, three in haiku) or more "literally" still, the number of syllables (morae, 5-7-5-7-7 in *waka* and 5-7-5 in haiku). It may also apply to reflecting the original word order. As will be seen below, early Anglophone translators from Japanese use the term "literal" very loosely, running the gamut from the word-for-word variety to the kind considered readable but not as "poetic" in a 19th-century sense. For more specific distinctions between "word-for-word," "literal," "faithful," "semantic," "adaptation," and "free," see Newmark 1981.
7. English was not the earliest medium for the translation of Japanese poetry. The first extant one into a European language was by the Portuguese Jesuit João Rodrigues (1561/62–1633/34), in his *Arte da Lingoa de Iapam* (1608). The speaker is a mother who regrets living on after her child has died. The verse is rendered this way in Rodrigues's Portuguese romanization, presciently reflecting the five measures and the long and short halves of the original:

Vaquete fuqu, cajecoso vquere, fana tomoni
Chirade conofaua, nado nocoruran

A modern English romanization and translation reads thus:

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| wakete fuku | How painful the wind |
| kaze koso ukere | that blows on one and not the other! |
| hana tomo ni | Why do the leaves not fall |
| chirade konoha wa | with the cherry blossoms |
| nado nokoruran | but instead remain behind? |

The Portuguese romanization is taken from Cooper 1991. In addition there are verses preserved by Isaac Titsingh (1745-1812, see n. 15 below) and Heinrich Julius Klaproth (1783-1835). The latter is mentioned in the Forward by Donald Keene to Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkôkai 1965, iii. Among the notable early French scholars of Japan were Léon de Rosny (1837-1916) and Michel Revon (1867-1943/47), and working in German were August Pfizmaier (1808-87) and Karl Florenz (1865-1939). Nor do I mean to imply that English was necessarily better suited to the task than other languages; indeed Georges Bonneau (1938, 35) makes the case that French is the best because the vowel qualities are similar in the two languages and because French poetry is syllabic.

8. Some Anglophone translators explicitly advertised their debt to foreign scholarship, e.g., Arthur Lloyd (1897) in *Japanese Poems: From the German Adaptation of Dr. Karl Florenz*. There is also a growing body of translations of Japanese literature into other East Asian languages, but these too must be passed by here. And the history of Japanese translation from foreign languages is yet another rich area for research; one starting point is Clements 2015.
9. Friedrich Schleiermacher, "On the Different Methods of Translating," in Venuti 2004, 49. Schleiermacher, whose work was first published in 1815, comes down in favor of foreignized translations that expand stylistic awareness of the text on the part of the target audience, as opposed to domesticated paraphrases that obscure difference. See Venuti 2008. An alternative anthology is Schulte and Biguenet 1992. For basic background, see Barnstone 1993. Rebekah Clements (2015, 14) draws attention as well to the fact that "in recent years the translation studies discipline has questioned the traditional 'source-target' language opposition and recognized that certain hybrid languages of translation may sometimes bridge the gap between the two," with one excellent example being Japanese translation practices related to Sino-Japanese (*kanbun* 漢文) texts. For more on "polysystems" of reading norms, see Even-Zohar 1990 and Toury 1995.
10. James J. Y. Liu, in Owen 1996, xlili.
11. One familiar examination in English of the history of Western reception of Eastern cultures is Said 1978.
12. See Butler 2012. She recounts the debate surrounding the question of literalness that took place between Edmund Wilson and Vladimir Nabokov centering on the latter's Pushkin translation. In *The Triple Thinkers*, Edmund Wilson (1948) argues that any literal translation kills the original. But years later, Nabokov turned around and did exactly what Wilson railed against and created a Pushkin literal, thus effectively ending their friendship. See Wilson's review in *The New York Review of Books* (1965).
13. "Having penetrated, [the translator] hopes, to the heart of a work, he has, then, to find his way out again—the double-labyrinthine process referred to in the subtitle of this volume" (Weissbort 1980, x).
14. Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator: An Introduction to the Translation of Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens*" (1921), in Venuti 2004, 76. This publication also corrects Harry Zohn's translation. Another early apologist for literal translation was the poet Robert Browning, who in the 19th century attempted a literal rendition of *Agamemnon* into English, based on his belief that literalness was the *sine qua non* of translation. But Eugenio Benitez has responded to Browning's ideal of literalness by pointing out that "the more one studies that strange, general language [of ancient Greek], the more it seems possible that *no* sentence, perhaps not even any *phrase*, of ancient Greek actually says just one thing." He continues that "grammatically faithful translation doesn't give anything *like* the experience that an ancient Greek had who saw the play (Benitez 2004, 260, 264).
15. While Englebert Kaempfer's *History of Japan* was first published in 1727, in the English translation of J. G. Scheuchzer, the first translations of Japanese poetry into English may be those that appear in *Illustrations of Japan* (London, 1822), written by the chief agent of the Dutch East India Company in Japan, Isaac Titsingh, and translated into English from French

by Frederic Shoberl. A number appear throughout the work in romanization with English paraphrases beneath. The work also contains a section entitled “Fragments of Japanese Poetry” in which the *waka* are formatted with remarkable foresight in five measures with romanization on the left, Latin translations on the right, and prose paraphrases in English beneath (Titsingh 1822, 150-57). Given their seminal position in the history of Japanese poetry translation, it seems appropriate to reproduce the first ones in the book here. Titsingh took them from *The Tale of the Heike* (*Heike monogatari* 463-64), where Retired Emperor Shirakawa (“Zirokava”) has given his beloved Gion Consort, already pregnant with his child, to Taira Tadamori (“Fada-mori”). Shirakawa says that if a daughter is born, he will raise it; if a son, Tadamori should. A son is born, and Tadamori announces the fact to the retired emperor by composing the upper half of a *waka* while holding sprouts from a yam patch, which generates a clever pun on *imo ga ko*, meaning both “yam sprouts” and “lady’s child” (again, the Japanese need not distinguish between singular and plural). The emperor then caps the verse, extending the pun and telling Tadamori to raise the boy. Here is the version in the English translation of Titsingh’s work, in which the Japanese romanization and names are corrupted but the sense is well maintained:

I moga kao
Fofo dono ni koso
Nari ni kiri.

–“What is to be done with the crawling offspring of a concubine?” Zirokava immediately replied in these lines:

Fada-mori torite
Yasi na-I ni ze yo.

–“Fada-mori, adopt and take care of him.”

In more literal form the double meanings of the linked verses are as follows:

| | |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| imo ga ko wa | The yam sprouts |
| hau hodo ni koso | have now grown |
| narinikeri | to where they are crawling. |

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| | The child of the lady |
| | has now grown |
| | to where it is crawling. |

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| tada mori torite | Just take a pile |
| yashinai ni se yo | and use them for nourishment! |
| | Take him, Tadamori, |
| | and raise him! |

16. In an endnote (287-90) Busk reviews the bibliography on Japan available at the time, acknowledging particular indebtedness to von Siebold’s *Nippon: Archiv zur Beschreibung von Japan*. Alas, the author adds that “Klaproth censures Titsingh’s translations for being inaccurate ... and his own are similarly condemned by Siebold and his coadjutor J. Hoffmann” (213). Here is one of the two poems that appear in the work, as romanized then translated into English from the Dutch:

kokoro da ni makoto,
no mitri ni kana fi naba
!! no ra tsoe to te mo kami,
lama mo ramoe

Upright in heart be thou, and pure,
So shall the blessing of God
Through eternity be upon thee;
Clamorous prayers shall not avail,
But truly a clear conscience,
That worships and fears in silence.

The verse is a famous one attributed to Sugawara Michizane 菅原道真 (845-903); in more literal form it reads as follows:

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| kokoro dani | If only your heart |
| makoto no michi ni | be in accordance |
| kanainaba | with the way of righteousness, |
| inorazu to te mo | then pray to them or not, |
| kami mo mamoramu | you will have the gods' protection. |

The author's remarks above about prolixity in the earlier translation seem justified. On Busk, see Curran 1998, and for a biography of Titsingh, see Boxer 1950.

17. The Foreign Language Institute rates Japanese as a "super-hard language" for English speakers, the other languages in that category being Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Korean. I note this here to give an idea of the challenges the original Anglophone translators faced.
18. For a short introduction to classical Japanese poetry, see Horton 2012a. Among full-length monographs, Brower and Miner (1961) remains the standard introduction in English to the classical form of the art. There is also Rimer and Morrell 1984. For a useful handbook on premodern Japanese literature, consult Miner, Odagiri, and Morrell 1985.
19. "Ought we only view the blossoms at their peak, or the moon at its fullest? ... In all things, it is the beginnings and ends that are the most moving" (*Tsurezuregusa*, 201).
20. On homoeroticism in premodern Japanese poetry see, for example, Schalow 1993 and 2007.
21. The phrase is taken from Cohen, Wixted, et al. 2008.
22. The verse also appears with the last measure as *ato naki ga goto*. It has also been rendered thus: *yo no naka o nani ni tatoemu asaborake kogiyuku fune no ato no shiranami* (*Shūishū* 拾遺集 12: 1327).
23. The collection of exemplary tales (*setsuwa* 説話) *Konjaku monogatari* (12th century), for example, says that Takamura composed it. See "Ono no Takamura, Oki no kuni ni nagasari-shi toki waka o yomeru koto dai yonjūgo" 小野篁、被流隠岐国時讀和歌語第四十五, in Book 24 of *Konjaku monogatari* (342-43).
24. Compare, for example, "in the spring field, the mist rises and spreads" (*haru no no ni kiri tachiwatari*, *Man'yōshū* 5: 839) versus "when autumn comes, the mist rises and spreads (*aki sareba kiri tachiwataru*, *Man'yōshū* 6: 923).
25. See Konishi, Brower, and Miner 1958.
26. *Kokinshū* 9: 407 is also in *Hyakunin isshu* (no. 11).
27. A pivot between Izumi and *itsu mi* is not by itself implausible by any means, as seen, for example, in *Hyakunin isshu* no. 27 (also *Shinkokinshū* 11: 996), by Fujiwara Kanesuke 藤原兼輔 (877-933) (I translate Izumikawa as "Spring [i.e., fountain] River" here to show how the first part of the poem [the "preface" (*jo* 序)] ties to the proceeding body of the verse):

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| mika no hara | Like Spring River |
| wakite nagaruru | which bubbles forth and flows by |
| izumikawa | Mika Meadow, |
| itsu miki to te ka | what look made this longing spring, |
| koishikaruramu | that I should miss her so? |

The problem with our *miyako idete* verse is rather that “when see” cannot without considerable stretching be made to fit the grammar.

28. *Kokinshū chū* 古今集注, in the collection of Ochanomizu Library, for example, construes the boats and the islands as plural. See Hanabe 1993, 114. Added to these interpretations of the poem are esoteric allegorical ones, one of which holds that this is “a Buddhist eulogy for a dead prince” (Klein 2002, 34).
29. Satow 1874, 557. I am indebted to Henitiuk 2014. Another biographical source on Satow is Ruston 2010.
30. On Chiyo, see Donegan and Ishibashi 1996.
31. The haiku 俳句 developed from the hokku 発句, the first verse of an extended linked-verse (*renga*) sequence, of either the orthodox (*ushin* 有心) or unorthodox (haikai 俳諧) variety. Composed of 17 syllables, the hokku stood alone until linked to by a 14-syllable rejoinder, which in the early stages of the linked-verse art might be meant to form a single waka verse of 31 syllables or remain two independent but connected statements. The mature form of the linked-verse art, though, consisted of long chains of alternating 17- and 14-syllable verses, each of which was at once semantically and syntactically independent while at the same time linking to the previous verse. Orthodox linked-verse sequences usually contained a hundred verses, whereas haikai ones in the Edo period tended to contain 36. Eventually some hokku were composed to stand alone permanently. The word haiku (haikai verse), i.e., a verse in an unorthodox linked-verse sequence) existed in the Edo period, but it did not become popular as the preferred term for a stand-alone 17-syllable haikai verse until after the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Thus the words haikai, hokku, and haiku may all refer, depending on context and age, to the same 17-syllable verse form. For an introduction to linked-verse history and practice, see Horton 2011.
32. Basil Hall Chamberlain cites the poem in *Bashō and the Japanese Poetical Epigram* (Chamberlain 1902, 264).
33. Cicero, *De Optimo Genere Oratorum* (The best kind of orator), 365. For a modern essay on this issue, see Levitin 1992.
34. The romanization omits the final grammatical particle after *asagao*.
35. Arnold’s third wife was Kurokawa Tama. *Seas and Lands* (Arnold 1891b) and another work dealing entirely with Japanese culture, *Japonica* (Arnold 1891a), were both published in book form after having previously been serialized.
36. On Aryan racial theory at the turn of the century and its relation to Japan, see, for example, Bradley 2009.
37. Quoted in Said 1978, 214. John Timothy Wixted (1992: 30) summarizes: “A main thesis of Said, drawing on Gramsci and others, is that knowledge is power; not only does such knowledge fashion the image one has of another culture or society, it is also used to dominate that culture ... Culture A’s representation of the reality of Culture B, particularly when Culture A is militarily and/or economically much stronger than Culture B, will likely be used as justification to try to change (i.e., to reform, to ‘correct’) that B’s reality, supposedly for B’s own good but in fact largely and insidiously to serve A’s own self-interest and self-image.” Lord Curzon made his remarks to support the establishment of a school of Oriental studies.
38. Already in the 1850’s Japanese art had begun to be exhibited in Britain, and interest was further stimulated by the Japanese Court at the International Exhibition in London in 1862 and the arrival the same year of the first Japanese embassy to Europe. Fascination with Japanese arts and crafts, notably woodblock prints (*ukiyo* 浮世絵), became widespread in the 1860’s and 1870’s and exerted an important influence on such artists as James McNeill

Whistler and Edgar Degas (see Miner 1958). One notable moment in the early history of japonisme was the acquisition by the French artist Félix Bracquemond (1833-1914) of a copy of the sketchbooks of the great creator of woodblock prints Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (1760?-1849). Even the French Symbolist Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898) decorated his study with Japanese art (see illustration no. 12 in Millan 1994, n.p.).

39. The work is more formally entitled *Ogura hyakunin issu* 小倉百人一首, after the site of Fujiwara Teika's villa on Mt. Ogura, where he is said to have made the anthology.
40. There have been many interpretations of this verse. *Yu* has even been interpreted as a variant of the interjection *yo*, in which case the meanings of the *Man'yōshū* and the *Shinkokinshū* / *Hyakunin issu* variants are identical (Kubota, Fujihira, and Yamaji 1970, 5).
41. For a discussion of the meaning of *tago no ura yu* and the likely place where Akahito composed the poem, Satta Pass (Satta Tōge 薩埵峠), see Aoki 1955, and vol. 2 of Itō 1995-2000, 118-19 and 147-49.
42. Vol. 2 of Itō 1995-2000, 148-49. But Kamochi Masakazu in *Man'yōshū kogi* (1891) construes the *Man'yōshū* speaker too as setting out in a boat from Tago and seeing Fuji from the bay (vol. 2, 459-60). We will return to Kamochi presently.
43. Dickins subsequently returned to England in 1879, where he was called to the bar. For more on Dickins, see Kornicki 1999. The only Westerners tolerated by the shogunate were the Dutch, who were confined to Dejima, a small island in Nagasaki Bay.
44. Here is an example of the extent of Dickins's revision. His initial version of poem no. 11 in *Hyakunin issu* (translated here earlier) reads thus:

Come, friend, with me the islands thread,
 In fisher's skiff, the eighty isles—
 O'er the vast expanse of ocean spread,
 As ply the sculls, the fisher's wives,
 The anglers art,
 To the isle-men let us, friend, impart.

Beneath, he adds this paraphrase: "Let us advance by means of our sculls, threading the eighty islands set in the bosom of the broad sea, and teach to man the (use of the) fishing-boat of fishermen" (vol. 3 [20]: 186).

In his subsequent volume (1866, 7) he corrected it to this:

Ye fishermen, who range the sea
 In many a barque, I pray ye tell
 My fellow-villagers of me—
 How that far o'er vast ocean's swell
 In vessel frail
 Towards Yasoshima I sail.

His paraphrase beneath the poem is still incorrect: "the *Yasoshima*, 'eighty isles,' near Oki, on the west coast of Nippon, on which occasion he indited his song to a friend." *Yasoshima* is instead a common noun for "eighty islands." But the revision is a great improvement on the first attempt and a testament to Dickins's seriousness of purpose.

45. In *Shinkokinshū* the Tago Bay verse is included not in the book of travel poems (Book 10) but in the one containing verses about winter (Book 6), so if Dickins consulted this anthology, he would have been further inclined to read the verse as being about reclusion rather than travel.
46. The first two lines of the poem contain six and eight *kana* rather than the normal five and seven. These hypermetric measures (*jiamaru* 字余り) relate to oral delivery. Where a vowel that ends one syllable precedes a single-vowel syllable, as in *Ta-go-no-u-ra-yu* or *u-chi-i-de-te-mi-re-ba*, the two vowels combine, making the lines read aloud, through synalepha, as though they had the normal 5 or 7. See also Brooks 1975, 263ff.
47. I take "syllabic-prosodic" from Lotz 1972.

48. Basil Hall Chamberlain was the older brother of the political philosopher and fascist ideologue Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855-1927) but was not related to Neville Chamberlain, the prime minister. He also translated the myth-history *Kojiki* (*A Translation of the 'Ko-ji-ki' or Records of Ancient Matters*, 1882), wrote a grammar (1887), and produced the miscellany *Things Japanese* (1890). For more on Chamberlain, see Ōta 1998 and Cronin 2017.
49. Longfellow (1855, 39). The *Kalevala* was initially compiled in 1835 by Elias Lönnrot (1802-84) from oral folklore and then enlarged in 1849. Bosley (2013) notes that in *Kalevala* "a line has eight syllables; stress always falls on the first syllable of a word; every line has alliteration. Soon after the *Kalevala* came out in its final version, the Baltic German linguist Franz Anton Schiefner (1817-1879) published the first German translation in 1852. He ironed out the metre into a trochaic tetrameter, and disregarded the alliteration." Longfellow evidently knew a smattering of Finnish, but he more likely read the work in Schiefner's version, which was subsequently partially translated into English trochaic tetrameter by John Addison Porter in 1868. Longfellow was not the only Anglophone to be influenced by the *Kalevala*; it also informed *The Lord of the Rings*, by J. R. R. Tolkien (1892-1973). But Longfellow's epic was not the first epic poem in English to adopt trochaic tetrameter.
50. The connection between Chamberlain and the Native American and Finnish epics appears in Rutledge 1984: 225-28. See also Shinada 2000.
51. W. G. Aston likewise mentions "The Song of Hiawatha" in the context of the parallelism of *Man'yōshū* (which Chamberlain's translation nicely maintains) in his *A History of Japanese Literature* (1899, 33), a work to which we will later return.
52. Longfellow tried to make his Native America epic accurate and based it on actual legends. Hiawatha was Ojibway, and his love, Minnehaha, was Dakota.
53. Aston's *A History of Japanese Literature* was not, however, the first general account in English of Japanese literature (as opposed to poetry alone). That work was Roger Riordan and Tozo Takayanagi, *Sunrise Stories: A Glance at the Literature of Japan* (1896). The latter begins thus: "What is best in the literature of Japan does not bear translation. It is a literature of form without much substance, and, when pressed into the mould of a foreign language, its peculiar beauties are apt to disappear like the opal tints from a squeezed jellyfish" (v). I am indebted to Henitiuk 2010b. Aston also produced grammars of written and spoken Japanese as well as a translation of the myth-history *Nihongi* (1896). For more on Aston, see Sioris 1988. Aston's study was also preceded by a short overview by Clay MacCauley, *Japanese Literature* (1898). Therein, MacCauley notes that his book is an enlargement of a piece he wrote for the "Warner Library of the World's Best Literature," and he acknowledges the help of earlier work by Aston, Chamberlain, and Satow.
54. Algernon Mitford (later Algernon Bertram Freeman-Mitford, 1st Baron Redesdale, 1837-1916), was a British diplomat posted to Japan. He was the author of *Tales of Old Japan* (1871) and advisor to Gilbert and Sullivan when they were creating "The Mikado." Mitford was also the grandfather of the Mitford sisters. He had a common-law Japanese wife while in Japan and a child by her, and he was also perhaps the actual father of Clementine Hozier, wife of Winston Churchill. See Cortazzi 2002.
55. The five-line format for *waka* was also exploited early on in the German translations of Karl Florenz and the French ones of Michel Revon. Here are the renditions by Florenz (1906, 98) and Revon (1910, 91) of the Tago Bay verse:

Aus Tagos Busen
 Fahr' ich hinaus – da seh' ich
 Daß glänzend weiß
 Auf Fujis hohem Gipfel
 Der Schnee gefallen.

Sorti de chez moi, quand je regarde
 De la plage de Tago,
 La neige tombe
 Sur la haute cime du Fouji

Toute blanche!

56. MacCauley's work was republished in 1917 "with slight additions."
 57. Titles do, however, accompany a few poems in *Man'yōshū*.
 58. This error was replicated in Bryan 1929, 45 (the six-line lineation is due to lack of space):

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Tago no ura | Down fair Tago's shore |
| Ni uchi-idete mireba | Oft I take my way to see |
| Shirotae no | The matchless radiance |
| Fuji no takame [sic] ni | Of Mount Fiji's [sic] lofty |
| Yuki wa furitsutsu | height |
| | Gleaming in the snow- |
| | fall white!. |

59. "Break, Break, Break" was written in 1835 but first published in 1842. I am indebted for this example and its Romantic context to Perkins 1976, 4ff.
60. Ezra Toback in a personal communication (2018) reminded me of the contribution to this dialectic made by Raymond Williams in his classic *The Country and the City* (Williams 1973).
61. Remarkable for its era, this later work by Dickins is accompanied by a second volume of romanized transliterations.
62. Dickins (1907, 714) misquotes Florenz, however, failing to capitalize each line of the romanization and the German translation as Florenz does.
63. This publication is a reprint in one volume of *The Classical Poetry of the Japanese* (1880) and *Bashō and the Japanese Poetical Epigram* (1902).
64. "Why—damn it—it's medieval," I exclaimed; for I still had all the chronological snobbery of my period and used the names of the earlier periods as terms of abuse" (Lewis 1955, 206).
65. Though Walsh's anthology was published in 1910, the foreword is dated 1909, the year before the death of Edward VII.
66. The politics of translation is vitally important but beyond our scope here, as is the psychology of the Western translator *vis à vis* the Eastern Other. For more, see, for example, Sakai 1997, and for general perspective, Cheyfitz 1991, Bermann and Wood 2005, and Said 1978.
67. Miner 1958 and Ewick 2008. The latter is a comprehensive guide of more than 1,000 pages with more than 45,000 hyperlinked cross-references. See also Ewick 2004 and Ewick and De Angelis 2003. There are also Durnell 1983, Kodama 1984, Kita 1995, and Lavery 2013. Note too the impact on the Imagist poet Amy Lowell (1874-1925) of the Japanese woodblock prints in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (see Miner 1958 and Arrowsmith 2012).
68. Flint reviews the first of what would eventually be a three-volume set published between 1907 and 1910. They are superb examples of the woodblock crepe-paper books published by Hasegawa Takejirō 長谷川武次郎 (1853-1938). For more on Hasegawa, see Sharf 1994. Flint praises the books effusively: "As I turned over the pages ... my fingers trembled with delight. Surely nothing more tenderly beautiful has been produced of late years than this delicate conspiracy of Japanese artist with Japanese poet!" (212). Indeed, the books won a prize at the Japan-British Exhibition of 1910, about which more below. Arthur Lloyd's above-mentioned *Japanese Poems: From the German Adaptation of Dr. Karl Florenz* (1897) was another of Hasegawa's publications. It is to be wished, though, that Flint had been as scrupulous as he was enthusiastic—he mistakes the title as "Japanese Sword and Blossom Song" and attributes the book to Hasegawa, despite that fact that he refers in the body of the review to "translators," whom he never identifies.
69. Chamberlain 1902, *Bashō and the Poetical Epigram*, was subsequently included in Chamberlain 1910 (see n. 63). Chamberlain's *rakkwa* is a romanization based on premodern kana usage; the modern version is *rakka*.
70. Binyon's article is a review of Walsh 1910 (*The Master-Singers of Japan*), Porter 1909 (*A Hundred Verses from Old Japan*), Noguchi 1909 (*The Pilgrimage*), and Kawai 1909 (*The Crown-Imperial*). Binyon, a gifted poet and at the time Assistant Keeper of the Sub-Department of Oriental Prints and Drawings in the British Museum, was one of those

responsible for introducing Ezra Pound to the art of East Asia (see below). He would later personally experience the carnage of the Great War, about which he wrote his best-known poem, "For the Fallen." It was he who employed Arthur Waley at the British Museum.

71. For a more detailed overview of this shift, see Mostow 1996.
72. The policy of extraterritoriality had already been reexamined in 1894, with Britain undertaking to abolish it within five years.
73. Okakura had been a student of Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908), a scholar whose work later influenced Ezra Pound. Okakura was the founder of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts and then the first director of the Asia section of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. His brother Okakura Yoshisaburō 岡倉由三郎 (1868-1936) was likewise an interpreter of Japan to the West; he studied under Basil Hall Chamberlain, translated for the celebrated writer on Japan Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904), and authored *The Life and Thought of Japan* (1913) and a variety of works in Japanese, some of which were English dictionaries.
74. Kenchio Suyematz [Suematsu Kenchō], tr., *Genji Monogatari: The Most Celebrated of the Classical Japanese Romances* (1882). For more on Suematsu see Rowley 1997, Henitiuk 2010a, and Clements 2011.
75. Noguchi still used the earlier name hokku for the verse form known today as haiku (see n. 31).
76. Porter, *A Year of Japanese Epigrams* (1911), not to be confused with his *A Hundred Verses from Old Japan* of two years previous.
77. A similar observation was made earlier by Okakura (1906, 93) with regard to differing tastes in architecture: "To a Japanese, accustomed to simplicity of ornamentation and frequent change of decorative method, a Western interior permanently filled with a vast array of pictures, statuary, and bric-a-brac gives the impression of mere vulgar display of riches."
78. Miner (1958) outlines the influence of Lafcadio Hearn and James Whistler in raising European consciousness of Japan. But he points to Thomas Ernest Hulme (1882-1917) and Frank Stuart Flint (1885-1960) in particular as likely sources for Pound's introduction to Japanese poetry, as does de Gruchy 2003. Hakutani recognizes the roles of Hulme and Flint but emphasizes instead the role of Noguchi (1992). Note too that while "make it new" became an iconic slogan of the Modernist movement, Pound had recycled it from ancient Chinese; he first used it in 1928, well after the beginning of his thinking on Imagism and Vorticism, and it did not become a catchphrase until the 1950's (North 2013).
79. See n. 70.
80. August 24 or 31, 1911, in Omar Pound and Litz 1984, 44.
81. After Noguchi sent "The Pilgrimage" to Pound in 1911, he published various versions of an essay on hokku, including "Hokku" in July, 1912 (*The Academy* 13) and "What is a Hokku Poem?" in January, 1913 (*Rhythm* 12), either of which was perhaps among the influences on Pound's "In a Station of the Metro" poem, which first appeared in the magazine *Poetry* in April, 1913. Noguchi's *The Spirit of Japanese Poetry* appeared in the earlier part of 1914, and Pound's essay on Vorticism later in that year.
82. See Cross 1988.
83. On Arthur Waley, see de Gruchy 2003, to which I am indebted, and also Ivan Morris 1970.
84. Others besides Waley have used poetry for language training, one example remarkable for both audacity and incongruity being Francis William Newman's translation of *The Song of Hiawatha* into Latin. In it, the famous lines on Gitche Gumee appear thus (Newman 1862, 22):

Juxta ripas Aequeoris Maximi,
Lacús latissime relucentis
Nocomidis stabat tugurium,
Nocomidis e Lunâ genitæe.

85. Deutsch's article, "The Soul of Wit," is a review of Waley's *Japanese Poetry: The Uta* (Waley 1919). I am indebted to de Gruchy 2003, 70.
86. Waugh and Rand 1922. No pagination.

87. Page provides no citation or romanization, but the verse was composed by the daimyo Andō Nobutomo 安藤信友 (1671-1732), whose pen name was Kanri 冠里. It reads thus:

| | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| yuki no hi ya | A snowy day– |
| are mo hito no ko | he too is someone's child: |
| taruhiro | that sake-barrel boy. |

The speaker on a freezing day looks with compassion on an ill-clad sake-shop apprentice. The depiction is particularly sympathetic in a daimyo poet. A *taruhiro*, literally a “barrel picker-upper,” is a lowly apprentice who brings customers’ empty sake barrels back to the shop. The quotation that follows in Page’s remarks recalls “unfaithful faith kept him true, falsely,” from Tennyson’s “Lancelot and Elaine.” Chamberlain (1902, 262) also cites Nobutomo’s poem.

88. Vol. 1 of Pierson 1929-64, 3.
89. As shown in the following example from Pierson, the Tago Bay poem was originally written in a complex system in which hundreds of different Chinese characters (*kanji* 漢字) might be used either for their sound (phonograms) or their sense (semantograms). This is known as the Man’yō 万葉 writing system, as it was most famously used to record the poems in the *Man’yōshū* anthology. By the latter 9th century several hundred of those Man’yō characters had come to be written in simplified cursive forms and used for their sound alone. These phonograms, now known as *hentaigana* 変体仮名 (variant *kana*), constituted a somewhat more straightforward palette and remained in use until modern times. Waka poems in and after the Heian period (794-1185) were generally written in *hentaigana*, but occasionally with an admixture of some simple semantograms as well. It remained a plethoric system, however, and the choice of which characters to use in each environment was determined by the calligrapher. The system began to be simplified after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, and today, by government mandate, each of the basic 46 syllables in the modern language may only be written with one of two *kana* characters: *hiragana* 平仮名 for general use and *katakana* 片仮名 for foreign words and other specialized uses like onomatopoeia. (As indicated above, *kana* were developed from *kanji*, but today the word *kanji* generally refers to semantograms, whereas *kana* now refers to the two phonogramic syllabaries.) The old *hentaigana* system is now easily readable only by specialists. There was also a spelling reform after the Second World War that synchronized the writing system with modern pronunciation; it also reduced the number of *kanji* semantograms allowed for general use and simplified many of their forms.
90. Like Dickins, Pierson relied on Kamochi’s *Man’yōshū kogi*.
91. Woolf (1925) 1986, 265.
92. See also n. 58.
93. In his preface to *An Anthology of Haiku Ancient and Modern* (1932), Miyamori writes that it was a revised and expanded version of *One Thousand Hokku Ancient and Modern* (1930), “which was intended for Japanese students of English” (Miyamori 1932, i). The larger work of 1932, by contrast, was intended for students of either language.
94. A revised and abridged version, entitled *Haiku Poems, Ancient and Modern*, appeared in 1940. The lexicographer and grammarian of English Saitō Hidesaburō was the author of such works as *Saitō’s Idiomatic English-Japanese Dictionary*. Toyoda Minoru was a scholar of English language and literature, noted particularly for his translations into Japanese of works by Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and George Eliot.
95. Miyamori (1936, ii) thanks the missionary and writer A. C. Bosanquet for her “assistance with the translations and in general revision.” A revised and abridged version, entitled *An Anthology of Japanese Poems*, appeared in 1938.
96. The romanization translates as “snow, white as mulberry cloth, is falling on the lofty peak of Fuji.”
97. See also Ewick 2008, <http://themargins.net/bib/B/BD/bd047.html>.

98. Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai 1940. The English translation of the name Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai was The Japan Society for the Promotion of Scientific Research. The work was republished after the Second World War with a new foreword by Donald Keene (*The Manyōshū: The Nippon Gakujuutsu Shinkōkai Translation of One Thousand Poems* [1965]).
99. *Man'yōshū* 3: 317 (Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai 1940, 187-88). The lines of the verse here and elsewhere are justified flush-left save for the second, which is indented to accommodate the larger bold font of the incipit.
100. Horton 2012b, 86-87.
101. *Aikoku hyakunin isshu* was compiled by some of Japan's leading literary scholars, such as Sasaki Nobutsuna 佐々木信綱 (1872-1963) and Tsuchiya Bunmei 土屋文明 (1890-1990). After going through the censorship process, the work was published by Mainichi Shinbunsha in 1942 and revised in 1943. On collections modelled on *hyakunin isshu*, see Machotka 2009, 133-63.
102. Here is Sukeharu's verse in a more modern translation:

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| nishi no umi | Beware, you waves |
| yosekuru nami mo | from the western seas |
| kokoro se yo | that come rushing in! |
| kami no mamoreru | The gods are watching over |
| yamato shimane zo | these deep-rooted Yamato isles! |

103. Nitobe (1900, 164). The original verse was inscribed on a portrait of Norinaga at age 60. Nitobe provides no romanization, but here it is with a more modern translation:

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| shikishima no | Tell this to those who ask |
| yamatogokoro o | of the spirit of Yamato, |
| hito towaba | land of royal Shikishima: |
| asahi ni niou | blossoms of the mountain cherry |
| yamazakurabana | glowing in the morning sun. |

Shikishima no, perhaps referring to the site of two ancient imperial palaces, is a *makurakotoba* epithet conventionally associated with Yamato, itself the name of a province or an alternate term for Japan as a whole.

104. Taketomo 1942, 5 of the translation section.
105. Adelaide Crapsey pursued her art throughout a difficult youth and then a cruel illness, tuberculous meningitis, that cut short her life. In this respect she resembles Masaoka Shiki 正岡子規 (1867-1902), popularizer of the term haiku, who was eleven years her senior and also struggled with tuberculosis. She attended Vassar and then taught at Smith. Her one book of poetry, *Verses*, was published in 1915 and *A Study in English Metrics* appeared posthumously in 1918. For her collected work, see Smith 1977.
106. Yasuda later published his doctoral research as *The Japanese Haiku: Its Essential Nature, History, and Possibilities in English, with Selected Examples* (1957).
107. For an autobiography, see Keene 2008. There is also Keene and Rimer 1996.
108. The syllables that begin with "h" in the romanization were actually pronounced with an initial sound approximating "f" when Tomonori composed the verse, but Keene's point about the importance of the alliteration remains essential.
109. Another anthology from the relatively early postwar period is Bownas and Thwaite 1964.
110. Jakobson 1959, 139. He divides translations into intralingual translations within the same language, interlingual translations that replace a verbal sign in one language with a verbal sign in another, and intersemiotic translations, in which emphasis is placed not on specific words but on the general message.
111. Other important translators of *haiku* include (in chronological order), D.T. Suzuki's student R[eginald] H[orace] Blyth (1898-1964), e.g., *Haiku* (1949-52); William J. Higginson (1938-

- 2008), e.g., *The Haiku Handbook: How to Write, Share, and Teach Haiku* (with Penny Harter) (1985); Robert Hass (1941-), e.g., *The Essential Haiku: Versions of Bashō, Buson, & Issa* (1994); Cor van den Heuvel (1931-), e.g., *Haiku Anthology* (1999); David Landis Barnhill (1949-), e.g., *Bashō's Haiku: Selected Poems of Matsuo Bashō* (2004), and Jane Reichhold (1937-2016), e.g., *Basho: The Complete Haiku* (2008). For thoughts on the literal translation of haiku, see Maeda 1969.
112. Robert H. Brower was trained in classical Japanese literature and specialized in the poetry of the *Shinkokinshū* era; Earl Miner was a scholar of comparative literature and an authority on Dryden.
 113. "Preface," in Keene 1955, n.p.
 114. Harold Wright (2011, 1) divides these camps into the "literal" and the "libertine."
 115. The poem, *Kokinshū* 14: 735 (by Ōtomo no Kuronushi 大友黒主), is included in McCullough's *Tales of Ise* (1968, 161).
 116. This *Kokinshū* poem too also appears in McCullough's *Tales of Ise* (1968, 162).
 117. On the *genbun itchi* movement, see Twine 1978 and Tomasi 1999.
 118. One wonders if Honda believed his observation to apply equally well to all Japanese dialects, with their varying pitch accents.
 119. Though the notion of four-beat measures in the *waka* has a long history, I am indebted to the discussion of the phenomenon in Kawamoto 2000. See also Gilbert and Yoneoka 2000.
 120. Suga 1991, front matter.
 121. Vol. 1 of Suga 1991, 170.
 122. See also Brooks's "Nine Maxims on Translation" (2002a) and "On Translation: Rhyme and Form" (2002b), in which he discusses the problems involved in translating rhymed Chinese poems in unrhymed English and, as Honda does, rendering unrhymed Japanese poems in rhymed English.
 123. The five parts of the *waka* are sometimes referred to as beginning measure (初句), second measure (二句), third measure (三句), fourth measure (四句), and fifth measure (五句), or as head measure (首句), shoulder measure (肩句), chest measure (胸句), waist measure (腰句), and tail measure (尾句). Lewis Cook in a personal communication notes that the latter terms are found in *Gyokuden shinpikan*, 563.
 124. Hiroaki Sato (1942-), for example, calls the *waka* a "mono-linear form." The debate between proponents of unilinear (to be etymologically consistent) and multilinear formats became particularly heated in the 1970's and 1980's. See, for example, Sato 1978 and later in his exchange with Earl Miner (Sato and Miner 1979). Miner (1982) also critiqued the one-line form in a review of Sato and Watson 1981 and was subsequently joined in opposition to it by William R. LaFleur (1983). Sato responded in 1987.
 125. "The stanza-box invented by japanology," in Mark Morris (1986, 560).
 126. Vol. 5 of Tamagami 1985, 162-65.
 127. Kensai 兼載, *Shuhitsu no omomuki* 執筆之趣, in Kaneko 1987, 128.
 128. *Kokon chomonjū*, 177. The verse is ascribed there to Ki no Tomonori; it appears anonymously as *Kokinshū* 4: 210.
 129. Note too the phenomenon of *oriku* 折句, wherein a *waka* is composed so that the first syllable of each measure will by the end spell out a hidden word or words totaling five syllables, or so that the first and last syllables of each measure will spell out one or more of ten. One example is the famous poem composed by Ariwara Narihira 有原業平 in *The Tales of Ise* wherein he composes a verse on the essence of travel, starting each measure with a syllable of the word for "iris," *ka-ki-tsu-ba-ta*.
 130. Sato and Watson 1981, 58.
 131. *Yakumo mishō*, 50.
 132. Haruna 1976, 36.
 133. Haruna 1976, 45.
 134. For five-line translations of the *Genji* verses together with commentary, see Cranston 2006.
 135. For an example of a translated *Nō* play in which the metered passages are rendered syllabically in English and unmetered passages not, see Horton 1988.

136. *Yōkyokushū* 1973, 364-65.
137. Here, Tyler (1970, 23) adds a note on the actors' gestures: "They look down as if catching a glimpse of their reflections in the water. The movement of their heads 'clouds' the expression on their masks, making it seem sad."
138. For a more detailed discussion of Tyler's translation of Nō plays, see Horton 1994.
139. MacMillan 2008, verse no. 4 (n.p.).
140. The verse also appears as *Man'yōshū* 11: 2802.
141. This is not to say that this approach is MacMillan's invention; cf., for example, *Calligrammes* by Guillaume Apollinaire.
142. My people at home
must be waiting in purity and prayer,
as at this Isle of Prayer,
for the quick return of one
who has set out on a journey!

The Japanese language of the 8th century that was spoken in the Nara capital also likely had eight vowels rather than the current five, but those values are not represented in this reconstruction.

143. On the phonology of Old Japanese, see Bentley 2001, Miyake 2003, and Vovin 2005.
144. LaFleur 1977, 17, *Sankashū* 3: 362.
145. Hatooka 2008, 123.

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